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*TAKEN BY SIEGE.**

CHAPTER VIII.

YOU may be sure that Rush Hurlstone was not slow to accept the invitation of Helen Knowlton to "drop in some evening." As she had requested, he took his banjo with him ; and to say that he enjoyed his privilege is not doing justice to his sensations. There is no denying that Rush was a very attractive fellow. He was a gentleman by birth and instinct ; he was bright, and could be very amusing. He was so much younger than Helen that Aunt Rebecca regarded him as "perfectly safe," and Helen never thought of him as anything more than an agreeable boy,—enthusiastic, and enough of a musician to be sympathetic. His ear for music was quite remarkable. Of notes he knew little, but he could catch an air and play it on the piano after a few hearings. Helen Knowlton, whose outward life was necessarily more or less artificial and constrained, found this young fellow a pleasant change from the men of fashion and of the stage by whom she was usually surrounded. By the people of the stage she was surrounded only at the opera-house, to be sure, but she saw enough of them to have a pretty poor opinion of their manhood, the tenor's in particular. Indeed, she quite shared the opinion of a big-voiced basso I once knew, who, on being asked if he didn't think a certain tenor was a pretty good fellow, replied, "Yes, as good a fellow as a man can be who sings in that clef." No, the average tenor is not a very noble animal. He is as whimsical as a woman, and a very whimsical woman at that, and vain beyond

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words. I don't say that there are no exceptions to this rule, but, if there are, they have not come under my observation. I am sorry to say that Rush occasionally dropped into song, but he sang very unprofessionally, and his voice was a barytone. He was on such friendly relations with Helen and her aunt that one evening, when he wanted to show them how a certain Creole song went which he had picked up from a young Louisianian at college, he played the strange accompaniment on the piano and sang the song. Helen was delighted with his voice as well as with the song, and she thought his style, uncultivated as it was, very fascinating. She complimented him so judiciously that he was led on to sing often, and she offered to teach him some odd Scandinavian songs she had brought home from Europe with her. So it will be seen that their evenings were passed very pleasantly. Aunt Rebecca did not like her niece to be dragged too deep into the social whirlpool; she thought that her professional life was exciting enough, and, unless Helen had some invitation she could not well refuse, she liked her to pass a quiet evening at home. She looked upon Rush as a godsend, for he was interesting enough to keep Helen from being bored by herself, and as he was so young and without fortune he did not come into line with possible suitors for her niece's hand. Rush was very well satisfied with this arrangement, for it put him upon a very friendly footing. Helen would see him when she would not see men whom she regarded with more favor in a certain way, for she did not feel that she had to put herself out to entertain him. When West Hastings referred to Rush's rather intimate footing in the family, she replied that he was "only a boy," and seemed to be very much amused that this man of the world should regard him with the slightest feeling of jealousy.

"Boys are often more dangerous than they seem to be," he replied, with a slight scowl; for nothing annoyed him more than to be laughed at, no matter how gentle the laugh.

As for Helen, she soon forgot the conversation. She liked Rush as a companion,—*"a nice young brother,"* was the way she put it. Rush did not regard Helen with so Platonic an affection. He fell more deeply in love with her every time he met her, and he was very much afraid that he would betray himself. Such a thing as that, he knew, would be fatal. So he waited as patiently as he could.

"Constant dropping wears away a stone," he said to himself. "I shall hang on and keep up my spirits as best I may. In the mean time, I shall work for money and position as no man ever worked before; and my time will come." Archie Tillinghast, who could not but notice Rush's devotion to Helen, said to him one day, "Rush, old man, I hate to see you playing tame cat to a prima donna."

Rush replied with a fierceness that must have proved to his friend that if there was anything of the cat in his disposition it certainly was not of the tame species. "If another man had said that to me, I would have made him measure his length on the sidewalk. But I will take a good deal from you, Archie. No more of this, however."

"As you like, dear boy," returned Archie; "but I think you are cut out for something better than to stand around with a hundred other men and burn incense before a public singer."

"Your words are no doubt well meant, Archie, but they are uncalled for. I am content to be one of a hundred now; there is no reason I should not be; but I may outstand the ninety-and-nine, and be swinging my censer all alone some day," he said, laughingly; and, putting his arm through Archie's, they continued their walk in peace and quietness.

Archie made up his mind to say no more upon the subject, no matter what he might think. "As well try to sweep the cobwebs out of the sky with a whisk-broom as to open a man's eyes when he is in this condition," he said to himself.

Rush was not always content with himself or with his position. There were times when he resented being treated as a boy. One night in particular he was in a lamentable state of mind. He had gone to the Academy with Helen and her aunt, and, naturally, expected to take them home; but West Hastings came behind the scenes with Uncle Lightfoot Myers, Mrs. Dick Griswold, and a lot of other people to congratulate the prima donna on a brilliant evening's work, and invited the whole party to supper at Delmonico's. Helen, who thought that Rush had brought her to the theatre to accommodate her rather than for any pleasure to himself, believed that he would be glad of the release, and said, in her politest tones, "I won't trouble you to take me home, Mr. Hurlstone. Mr. Hastings and these good friends have kindly volunteered their services. It was very good of you to bring me. Good-night," she added, putting out her hand. He bowed over it, but said nothing as he turned to go. "Stay, one moment," said Helen, taking up one of the dozen bouquets that had been thrown to her. It was of red roses: they were not so common then as they are to-day. West Hastings had sent it. He always sent the same, for he liked to hear people say, as it fell upon the stage, "That is from West Hastings: he always sends those big red roses."

"Mr. Hurlstone, don't you want a rose?" And, choosing the finest one from the bunch, she fastened it in his button-hole.

"Thank you," he said, rather stiffly, as he bowed himself out. He would have felt better in his mind if he had seen the expression of

annoyance that passed over West Hastings's face and known the cause. But he didn't, and he went out across the dimly-lighted stage in a most unenviable frame of mind.

"Am I a tame cat, after all?" he asked himself, bitterly. "Shall I allow her to kick me out of her way, and then come purring back and be happy again to rub up against her garments? What an idiot I am! This sort of thing will drive all the manhood out of me. I had better take to the wilds and chop wood to the end of my days. That at least would be a manly vocation. I'll never see her again. I'll forget all that has been so pleasant, and buckle down to work. I'll win fame and fortune, and then she will see what she has lost."

And he pictured scenes of future greatness, where he stood conspicuously in the foreground receiving the homage of the crowd (for what, he had not quite made up his mind), while in the background Helen Knowlton looked on and sighed, and said to herself, "Ah me! what might have been!" He found himself gazing (with his mind's eye) more intently at the background, where he pictured Helen, than at the foreground, where he pictured himself. Poor boy! he really suffered tortures. Just at that moment life did not seem worth living. He had been walking aimlessly along as these thoughts had been flying through his brain, and he did not notice where he was until the awning across the sidewalk (it was a cloudy night) reminded him that he was in front of Delmonico's.

He almost recoiled. "If she saw me she would think I was following her," he muttered. The thought hardly passed through his mind when he heard his name called, and, turning, he saw Bessie Archer, her father, and Archie Tillinghast alighting from a carriage drawn up at the curb.

"We are just going into Del's to have a bird: won't you come with us? I'm sure Uncle Archer and Cousin Bessie will be delighted," said Archie, pulling him gently by the arm. Mr. and Miss Archer added that nothing would give them greater pleasure, and they said it with so much sincerity that Rush accepted the invitation. Their cordiality was not his only reason for accepting. He hoped, poor boy, that Helen would see him there, and with another woman! It was quite late, and there were not more than half a dozen people in the restaurant. The birds, however, had barely been served when a feminine rustling was heard in the door-way, and a voice that brought the blood to Rush's cheeks and set his heart to beating like a trip-hammer said, "I feel too tired to climb a flight of stairs; let us have supper in here: it is late, and every one has gone." She didn't see the little party. It was just out of her range from the door. So they came, and were waved to

their seats by the dignified François, whom Rush had mistaken for Delmonico the first time he visited the place.

"Why, there is Bessie Archer," said Helen, bowing and smiling, and bowing and smiling again as she recognized Rush and the others. Rush had hit upon a plan of action. He was going to make Helen see that he could be happy with another woman (she had never for a moment doubted it), and he laid himself out to be agreeable to Bessie. For her part, Bessie was very much predisposed in his favor, and was not at all averse to his attentions. When her health was proposed by Archie, Rush drank to her with his eyes as well as with his lips, and he took a sly glance to see if Helen was looking. She wasn't, as it happened: she was listening very attentively to something that West Hastings was saying. At last Rush felt her eyes turned in his direction, and he played his ace of trumps: he took the rose she had given him from his button-hole and presented it to Bessie in his most impressive manner, and Bessie tucked it in the folds of her hair. Helen saw all this, and she said to herself, "Why, the dear boy is in love with Bessie Archer. He couldn't do better; for she is a great catch and a very lovely girl." But down in her heart she felt a little pang at losing so devoted and pleasant a friend as Rush had been; for if he became engaged to Bessie their little evenings would come to an end. However, she would not be selfish, and he might count on her as a friend to further his suit.

CHAPTER IX.

RUSH was working very hard at the office of *The Dawn*. During his first acquaintance with Helen Knowlton he had written special articles, for which he was paid so much a column, but now he was taken regularly upon the staff of the paper, on a salary of thirty dollars a week. He was in no special department, but acted in the capacity of "general utility man," which gave him just the experience that he most needed. He worked in the city department, edited telegraph "copy," and wrote occasional editorials, so that his nights were pretty well occupied, and he could not have renewed his evenings at Helen's had he been so inclined. He was trying to drive her out of his mind; but he found that simply impossible.

To refrain from calling at her house was much easier; yet he did not accomplish even that sacrifice very successfully. When he left the office of *The Dawn* at half-past one or two o'clock in the morning, he walked up to Twentieth Street and passed with lingering footsteps under her

window; but he had not called upon her since the night his pride had been so wounded by what he took to be her desire to rid herself of his company. He had called at the Archers', however. It came naturally in his way to do so. Sometimes he dropped in of an afternoon with Archie, and sometimes by special invitation of Bessie, who liked to talk over with him the things she was just then interested in. Buddhism was at this time attracting her attention, and, as Rush was much more liberal-minded than Archie, she enjoyed discussing this Oriental religion with him. Rush really cared little more for it than did Archie, but it was something to divert his mind. Had he dreamt for a moment what a hold it was getting upon Bessie, he would have politely but firmly declined to discuss the subject. He supposed that she took it up as he did, as an intellectual amusement; but with her it was a more serious matter. To the intense disgust of Archie, she renewed her acquaintance with Madame Parapoff, and continued to attend her *séances*. She did not ask Archie to accompany her any more, for she knew that he would try to argue her out of going, and, as she had made up her mind to go, the argument could only have ended unpleasantly. She got hold of a young married woman with a taste for the unnatural, and the two visited the very remote and dingy apartments of the High-Priestess of Buddha and listened to her twaddle with credulous ears.

As Archie was really in love with Bessie, I should explain that she was not his cousin, nor any blood relation to him: had she been, I should have taken no interest in his sentiment for her. She was Mrs. Archer's daughter, but she had been adopted, when she was five years old, by Mr. Archer, when he married her widowed mother. Archie had been brought up to regard her as his own cousin, but his feeling towards her had been of a warmer than cousinly nature for a good many years. She liked him more in the cousinly way, and always turned the conversation with a skilful stroke when she thought he was going to express other than the sentiments of a cousin towards her. Since her devotion to Buddha there had been a little coolness between them. He could not tolerate any such nonsense, and the thought of the class of people to whom Bessie was turning for esoteric information almost maddened him. Buddhism was only another name for spiritualism, he argued. The latter was a burned-out volcano from which its devotees were trying to throw out imitation lava to deceive the credulous. That Bessie Archer should be one of the deceived he considered a degrading thing. "Let the vicious and the vulgar run after such absurdities, if they will, but heaven forbid that a refined young lady should find any attractions in this tomfoolery!" was his reflection.

"My dear Bessie," he said to her, "if this Parapoff was what you

say, she would be sitting in a golden temple, dealing out her words of wisdom at a thousand dollars a word. There is nothing that men would better like to know than what the future has in store for them. If they believed that they could be informed with truth, they would pay any amount of money; for it would save them countless sums. People are credulous enough, in all conscience, and if they had the slightest encouragement to believe in these soothsayers they would patronize them to an extent that would make theirs the most profitable profession in the world rather than the most ill-paid. They would be living in palaces instead of in dirty rooms on back streets, and their patrons would be the rich and great rather than poor deluded servant-girls."

"But they are not all 'poor deluded servant-girls' who consult Madame Parapoff. Some very intelligent men and women visit her rooms,—among them your cousin Bessie Archer, who does not put herself in the class you mention."

"With the deluded, dear child, but not with the servant-girls. You can't show me an intelligent man or woman who seriously consults Madame Parapoff. The very fact that one consults her disproves his intelligence."

"You are so prejudiced, Archie Tillinghast, that if Madame Parapoff predicted something to you, and it came true, you would say it was all chance," exclaimed Bessie, indignantly.

"I am quite sure I should, Bessie; and I am equally sure that it would be," replied Archie.

"You are a very unsympathetic and narrow-minded young man," said Bessie, rising to leave the room, "and I shall never again speak to you on this subject. I find Mr. Hurlstone much more liberal."

"I am sorry to hear that: I had thought better of Hurlstone." And Archie opened the door for his cousin to pass out of the room. He was genuinely distressed; and well he might be,—for when a crotchet of this sort takes possession of an idle person's brain it is hard to uproot it. He felt sure that Bessie would become thoroughly disgusted in time, but when? He wondered if it could be possible that Rush was encouraging her in this nonsense. No, he could not believe that; but it began to dawn upon his mind that Rush might have taken his advice about the prima donna (he hadn't seen him with her of late) and been devoting himself to Bessie. He turned pale at the thought, for it was plain that Bessie liked him. Why hadn't he let his friend go on dancing attendance upon the singer? Why should he have interfered? It was just like him,—always standing in his own light.

The drawing-room door opened, and he heard Rush's voice saying to the butler, "Tell Miss Archer that I am here, James: she is expect-

ing me." Then, upon seeing Archie, "Ah, you here, Archie? glad to see you. I've called to take Miss Archer to see some pictures at Goupil's: won't you go along?"

"No, thanks," replied Archie, somewhat coolly; "I've an engagement down-town, and must say good-by;" which he did without loss of time. As Rush stood looking out of the window, he noticed that Archie turned up- instead of down-town, but he thought nothing of it, except that his friend had probably changed his mind. That he should have regarded him as a rival in the affections of Bessie Archer never occurred to him. In the first place, he did not suspect the state of Archie's feelings towards Bessie; and in the second, he supposed that Archie was thoroughly aware of his devotion to Helen Knowlton.

Rush was not altogether happy this afternoon. It was a whole fortnight since he had spoken a word to Helen. He had seen her in the mean time in an old-curiosity-shop in Broadway, accompanied by her aunt and West Hastings, and she seemed to be buying furniture. What did this mean? Were they actually engaged, and making preparations for housekeeping? No, they were not; it was nothing so serious as that. West Hastings was refurnishing the dining-room in his bachelor quarters. The craze for old furniture was just then at its beginning, and he had asked Helen and her aunt to accompany him to this shop to look at an old French sideboard he thought of buying. Helen had excellent taste, and she sealed the fate of the sideboard by pronouncing it a beauty.

This episode, as Rush interpreted it, was depressing enough of itself; but added to this he had received a long and desponding letter from his mother, telling him of the Mutual Dividend Mining Company, of Colonel Mortimer's connection with it, and of the offer he had made to John. "Do see John as often as you can, Rush dear, and keep him under your eye. You know how I dread the influence of Colonel Mortimer. He is a bad, unprincipled man, and dear John is so easy-going that he doesn't believe there is any harm in him."

John must have been in town for a week at least, and he had not yet made himself known to Rush. By chance, however, the brothers met. Rush was sent to report a masked ball at the Academy of Music, —a thing he felt utterly unfit to do. "I was never at a masked ball in my life," he told the city editor.

"So much the better," replied the editor. "You will give us fresh views of a hackneyed subject. I quite envy you your new sensations. Get your copy in as early as possible, and good luck to you."

Rush was about the first person to arrive at the ball, and the Academy looked gloomy enough. He had been told that the festivities did

not begin until late, so he arrived at nine o'clock, thinking that that would be about the fashionable hour. There was not a woman in the place, and the only men on hand were the floor-managers. He had plenty of time for reflection before the ball opened, and for the sake of the associations he wandered about behind the scenes. The stage and parquette were boarded over, but the prima donna's room was undisturbed. He looked in and sighed. A perfume of violets lingered on the air, and he sighed again as he recognized it, and then wandered to the front, where a room had been reserved for the press. A large table stood in the centre, furnished with paper, pens, and ink. There were a great many bottles on the table, but they did not all contain ink, or anything that looked like it.

He sat down and took a pen, and thought to improve the time by writing to his mother; but, as he could say nothing about John, he concluded not to. Instead, he wrote "Helen Knowlton" over three or four sheets of foolscap, in every variety of penmanship, and then tore the paper into fine bits. But, still fearful that the name might be discovered, he made a little pile of the scraps and burned them, watching their destruction with an expression of countenance not at all in keeping with the spirit of a masked ball. He shook his head sadly. "A man's hopes may be as easily destroyed as that paper," he said to himself, as he blew the ashes from the table. Then he sauntered out into the lobby.

There he found a very different scene from the one he had left. Men and women were crowding into the place as fast as the man at the wicket could take their tickets. Most of the men were in evening dress, but all the women wore dominoes and masks. There were a few who appeared in fancy-dress, but they were the German members of the society.

Rush was too young and too enthusiastic not to find excitement in the scene, and when the dancing began he thought he had never witnessed anything so brilliant and intoxicating as the movement of these many-colored dominoes to the music of the band. As time wore on, the place became more crowded, and Rush recognized among the men many faces that had become familiar to him at the opera and elsewhere. There was Uncle Lightfoot Myers renewing his youth, with a pink domino on his arm; and there was West Hastings lounging against one of the pillars of the balcony and chaffing a Columbine. Rush wondered what Helen Knowlton would think if she saw her friend thus engaged. His thoughts were broken in upon by a voice at his elbow.

"My handsome young friend," said a blue domino, taking his arm, "why do you pose in this melancholy attitude on so festive an occasion? This is Romeo's, not Hamlet's, night. Let us walk about among the

giddy revellers. I want to see a more cheerful expression upon your young face."

As they walked out into the lobby, Rush racked his brain to recognize the voice or figure of the mask. His expression showed that he was puzzled.

"Ah, you do not recognize me," she said. "How sad that makes me feel! A little disguise, and one's identity is gone. I should have known you through twenty disguises." And she turned her mask up at him in the most bewitching manner.

"Certainly I have never had the pleasure of hearing that voice before,—no man could forget so sweet a thing," said Rush, entering readily into the spirit of the ball. And so they thrust and parried, until his mask spied a spry old man with gray side-whiskers and a bald head, when she dropped Rush's arm as suddenly as she had taken it, and took the other by the hand.

"Dear general, I am so glad to see you! I have been looking for you all the evening, and feared you were not coming."

The general looked pleased, though puzzled; but this was not his first masked ball, and in a few moments Rush saw him moving off in the direction of the supper-room, the blue domino hanging affectionately upon his arm.

Before the night was over, Rush learned much of the ways of masked balls, and came to the conclusion that the blue domino was an entirely new acquaintance of his and of the general's. As he started for the press-room, he met his city editor with a Swiss peasant-girl on his arm. "Hello, Hurlstone," said he. And, stopping a moment, he whispered, "Get your copy down early, and then have your fun. You can write it out here and send it down." And he, too, passed on in the direction of the supper-room.

Rush hardly recognized the press-room when he returned to it. In the first place, he could hardly see across it for the smoke; and in the second, it was so noisy that he did not see how it would be possible to write there. "Hello, here's Hurlstone!" shouted a reporter of a morning paper whom Rush had seen at different places, but had never had occasion to speak to. "Come, fill up your glass and take a cigar," added the reporter, suiting the action to the word; only he took a handful of cigars; one he lighted, the others he put in his pocket. There were a dozen men sitting around the table, some writing, and all smoking. Rush declined both the proffered cigars and the champagne, though he lighted a cigar of his own in self-defence, and sat down in a corner to write. He used his note-book for copy-paper and his knee for a desk, and in the course of an hour he had a crick in his back and a very good

story written out for *The Dawn*. This he despatched. Then he went out into the ball-room to look around for a few minutes, after which he intended to go home to his lodgings. He had not passed half-way through the lobby when he saw Archie Tillinghast standing at the foot of the staircase, with his mask in his hand, gazing earnestly at the hundreds of dominoes who lounged past him or hurried by on mischief bent.

"Why, Archie, what are you doing here? You look as though you were expecting some one. Who is she? come, old fellow!" said Rush, shaking his hand and smiling knowingly.

"I'm looking for my cousin Bessie," replied Archie.

"What!" exclaimed Rush, starting back; "Miss Archer here?"

"Yes; why not? They all come; though they will deny it to-morrow. She is with her father, however, and Helen Knowlton and her aunt. They didn't come as regular participants in the ball, you know; they never do, only to see what sort of a place it is. To do them justice, they are not enjoying themselves very much. There is a sort of excitement about it, however; but when I saw them awhile ago they were just recovering from a fright. A half-tipsy fellow had addressed some coarse compliments to Miss Knowlton, and she was very much alarmed,—more, I fancy, at the idea of being discovered than anything else, for he said, 'I know you, my beauty.' Of course he didn't know her. That's what they all say. She wanted to go home at once, but Bessie didn't. That girl evidently has some mischief in her mind. I tried to find the man, to slap his face, but they couldn't point him out."

"How did you know them, Archie?" asked Rush. He was dying to meet Helen in her disguise, for he thought he would get a mask and say some things to her from its concealment that he wouldn't like to say in open court.

"How did I know them? In the first place, I brought them here, and in the second, they are dressed alike,—black satin dominoes, with a bunch of violets pinned on the left shoulder."

Rush could hardly talk with Archie, he was so impatient to break away and look for Helen in the crowd. At last, after a few common-places, he started in quest. He had not searched long before he was rewarded. There, sitting on one of the seats in the dress circle, he saw the object of his search. There was no mistaking the poise of that head, even had he not recognized the black satin domino and the bunch of violets on the shoulder. She was sitting alone. That was strange. Where were the rest of the party, and why should its most precious treasure be left unguarded? Hastily adjusting the mask he had bor-

rowed from Archie, Rush sat down in a vacant seat next to the domino.

"The beautiful Cinderella sitting alone at the ball," he whispered in her ear. She turned with a start; the eyes of the mask glared up at him. (Why do all eyes look so wicked behind a mask?) In a disguised voice, with just the least tremor of a laugh behind it, she replied, "Cinderella is waiting for her prince, and—he has come."

The boyish heart in the breast of the young man beat high. Did she recognize him? She called him "her prince." How he wished the pumpkin coach were waiting at the door, that he might drive off with her in triumph! They had a pleasant chat, only he felt that he was being chaffed pretty hard at times, and he thought that some of the expressions used by the lady were hardly such as he would expect to hear from Helen's lips. "However," he argued, "one feels freer behind a mask. If she only suspected me, how differently she would speak!"

In the midst of their lively sallies (she would not allow him to be sentimental), he heard an unmistakable voice behind him say, "Don't you think we have had enough of this, aunty?" And, looking around, he saw the fac-simile of the mask by his side, and near her Mr. Archer and another black domino, which he knew was Bessie.

He felt a sinking feeling: he wanted the floor to open and let him through; but it didn't. The resemblance between Aunt Rebecca and Helen was very strong, and, except that the former was a trifle heavier, their figures were much alike. Rush had often remarked the likeness, but he never expected to be caught in this way. Well, there was nothing for it. She evidently did not recognize him; at least so he thought. When Helen spoke about going, he rose to his feet.

"Nay, beautiful mask, why tear yourself away from this festive scene? Take my arm, and let us walk about among the gay revellers and amuse ourselves."

He offered his arm, but Helen drew back affrighted. Aunt Rebecca gave her a reassuring nod over Rush's shoulder. She took the proffered arm, and they strolled into the lobby. But all his glibness of speech had deserted him. He was going to say so much, and could say nothing.

Helen broke the silence by saying, in disguised tones, "You are not a very entertaining cavalier. Why don't you make yourself more agreeable, Mr.— Who shall I say?"

"I am speechless with happiness, fair mask," he replied. "To have so much loveliness so near me dazzles my eyes and paralyzes my tongue. If you only knew 'one-half my heart would say,' to quote from an old song, you might think better of me."

"I have no doubt you could be very eloquent on any theme you chose; but I am afraid you are a young man of words. You could be just as eloquent to the next mask that came along."

"On the contrary," answered Rush, somewhat loftily, "I would have nothing at all to say to another: my heart is not large enough for two masks."

"I have heard men protest in this way before, but they have forgotten what they said ere the last word left their lips. There was one young man in whom I believed, but even he turned out like all the rest. He professed the greatest friendship for me, visited me at my house, and we passed many pleasant evenings together; but suddenly his visits ceased. Without a word of warning he stopped coming to see me. Our pleasant evenings came to an end. Do you know why? He had formed a pleasanter friendship with another young lady, and I was forgotten."

"You are cruel: I formed no pleasanter friendship; I have never entertained but the one feeling for you since the first time I saw you," said Rush, before he knew what he was doing.

"What do you mean?" asked Helen, in the most innocent manner, knowing perfectly well all the while. "You formed no pleasanter acquaintance! *you* have entertained feelings for me! This is very mysterious. One expects mysteries at masked balls, but I am more than surprised at being spoken to in this way by an unknown mask."

"Then you don't recognize me," said Rush, taking some comfort to himself in the thought that he had not betrayed his identity, after all. By this time they had reached the end of the south lobby, and were just about to retrace their steps, when Rush felt Helen's hand tighten its grasp on his arm. "There is that awful man," she gasped, as a man walking very unsteadily came out of the directors' room, and, seeing Helen, started forward as if he would raise her mask. "Ah, here's my sweet violet," he said, in a thick, uncertain voice; but, before the words had fairly left his tongue, Rush gave him a quick, sharp blow between the eyes and sent him crashing up against the door of the room he had just quitted.

"Oh, Mr. Hurlstone, what have you done?" exclaimed Helen, in trembling tones; "quick, take me to my aunt."

Rush thought her advice good, and at once acted upon it. He was only sorry that he had not taken her to her aunt in the first place, and then come back alone and knocked the insolent fellow into a cocked hat. Fortunately, there happened to be no one at that end of the lobby just at that moment, but he heard people coming, and was dreadfully worried for fear of the annoyance to Helen if she were discovered under such circumstances.

"Come this way," said she, leading him through the little passageway at the back of the lower tier of boxes: "there is a door here that opens on the stage, and we can go around and get to my aunt and Mr. Archer without being noticed. Oh, why did I come to this dreadful place? Aunt Rebecca didn't want me to. If I had only listened to her!"

Rush felt extremely mortified. "I beg your pardon, Miss Knowlton," said he. He had taken off his mask, and they no longer played at mystery. "I should not have struck that fellow with you on my arm; but I am not used to masked balls. I don't know their etiquette. I only knew that you were insulted, and my indignation got the better of my judgment."

"I forgive you, Mr. Hurlstone," she replied; "but I don't forgive myself for coming to such a place. It is a lesson I shall never forget. Here are my friends," she added. And Rush saw the two ladies and Mr. Archer and Archie Tillinghast.

"Aren't you ready to go home yet?" said Bessie. "I think it pretty dull here."

They all agreed to go, and Rush bade them good-night at the door. Helen said nothing about the little episode of the lobby, and he was grateful to her.

After he had seen their carriage drive off, Rush returned to the lobby to see what had become of the man he had knocked down. On the way he saw many curious scenes,—among them the blue domino who had first spoken to him kissing the bald pate of the general. He was glad enough that Helen had gone. When he got around by the directors' room he heard a loud voice proclaiming, "I'd know the damned rascal if I saw him; he took me right between the eyes, before I had time to defend myself, damn him!"

Rush pressed through the crowd. He saw the man he had knocked down standing with his back against the wall, his hair rumpled and his shirt-front pretty well demoralized. A younger man had him by the arm, and was evidently urging him to go home. The young man's back was turned to Rush, and his figure swayed slightly as he tugged at the arm of his companion. Rush stepped up to him. "Is your friend much hurt?" he inquired.

"The colonel's not as hurt as he is mad," answered the young man, turning around slowly, "though he got a pretty hard blow. Served him right: he was too fresh, making up to another man's mask." And the young man steadied himself by the wall as he turned. Rush thought he detected something familiar in the voice, though it was thick with drink; but when the fellow turned around to the light he saw who it was.

"John!"

"Rush!"

And thus the brothers met for the first time in New York.

CHAPTER X.

RUSH's first meeting with his brother in New York was not his last. John gave him his address. He had a gorgeous suite of rooms up-town, where he lodged and took his breakfast. He and the colonel dined at "The Club," but it was not the sort of club men boast of belonging to. They called it the "Club" because they did not want to call it by its right name. The cooking was excellent, for its patrons were all judges of good eating, and the proprietor knew that to keep them he must cater to their palates as well as to their love of high play. John Hurlstone was a born epicure, and the kitchen of "The Club" was quite as much of a temptation to him as its gaming-tables, though he was pretty lucky at cards, for he had a cool head and a quick eye. Colonel Mortimer won much more money, however. That he was a card-sharper John did not suspect at this time, but he knew very well that he was a professional gambler, and that the Mutual Dividend Mining Company was one of the biggest games he ever played. The offices of this company were in Pine Street, near Broadway, and they were fitted up as luxuriously as "The Club." In the latter establishment Colonel Mortimer was a silent partner. The mining company's offices were furnished in the heaviest black walnut (that wood was the fashion then), and the furniture and partitions were made of the same material and pattern. The company's monogram was carved in the chairs and over the mantel-piece, it was ground in the glass and worked in the door-mat. There was a whole suite of offices,—one outside for the clerks, a private one for Colonel Mortimer, with "President's Room" engraved on the nickel door-plate, another for the "Secretary," John Hurlstone, and a large room, with a long table down the middle flanked by massive chairs, for the "Directors." A portrait of Colonel Mortimer hung over the fireplace, and a map of Colorado, showing the situation of the mine, took up a third of the opposite wall. In a handsome velvet-lined cabinet screwed to the wall between the front windows reposed specimens of the ore sent East by the company's engineer. What rich specimens they were, too! The silver fairly bulged out of them. One shelf of this cabinet was devoted to bricks of solid silver. When Colonel Mortimer got hold of a doubtful investor, he took him in this room and showed him the cabinet.

"There's the stuff, my good sir, and there"—pointing to the map—"is where it comes from. You see that district picked out in blue,—well, that belongs to the Mutual Dividend Mining Company. I am not going to press you to invest; by Jove, I'm not sure we want to sell. With a mine throwing out tons of such ore every day, it's rank nonsense to sell the stock. But I'm a bit of a philanthropist myself, and when I'm making money I want others to make it too. I don't think, however, I'll offer another dollar's worth of that stock. We won't talk mines any longer, but we'll taste some fine old brandy I keep here for just such judges as you. You'll admit that this is as good a glass of cognac as you ever tasted. There! how's that? And here are some choice cigars. (Don't betray me: they're smuggled. A friend of mine, a sea-captain, brings them to me from Havana.) Let us sit here before this genial fire—what is prettier, now, than a soft-coal fire?—and discuss cognac and cigars. They are much more interesting subjects than mining-shares; don't you think so?"

In this way Colonel Mortimer drew the poor flies into his net. They would discuss the cognac and the cigars, and end by begging the colonel, for the old friendship he bore them, to let them put a few thousands into the Mutual Dividend. This they always succeeded in getting him to do, though with great reluctance. I need not say that the colonel confined himself to the cigars rather than to the brandy. He did not object to drinking out of business-hours, but when he was playing for such high stakes he had to keep his wits about him.

Just how much John Hurlstone knew of what was going on I should not like to say. He knew Colonel Mortimer pretty well, and preferred not to ask too many questions. Mortimer paid him a large salary because he was invaluable to him. John was well educated, and wrote a good letter. Mortimer was badly educated, and it was said could just sign his name and nothing more. Indeed, it was further said that he only learned to sign his name by copying it as written out by John Hurlstone in their army days. Certainly his signature was very much like John's writing, and, when signed to a letter that John had written, was in perfect harmony with the rest of the autograph. Not only did Mortimer pay the company's secretary a handsome salary, but he gave him good lump-sums of money besides, which he said were the dividends on the shares he held in John's name. Mortimer could not have got along without John in this mining-company scheme, and he knew it; and he paid him well both to keep him in his service and to prevent his asking questions.

With all this money at hand, you would have supposed that John would send some home to his mother and sisters. Not he. Had they

asked him at a time when he had a roll of bills in his pocket, he would have handed it out to them ; but they asked for nothing, and they got nothing. John was a spendthrift, and, like most spendthrifts, he spent his money on himself. If he spent it upon other people, it was in the way of his own pleasure. He did send handsome presents to Amy Bayliss,—useless things that represented a lot of money but little taste. A tradesman could always sell him an unsalable article by representing it to be something unique and adding that few men would have the taste to appreciate its beauties and pay the price. The consequence was that Amy Bayliss had a collection of costly odds and ends that she could only praise for their costliness and because “dear John” had taken the trouble to send them to her. There were paper-cutters of frosted silver, and jewel-boxes much too fine for her modest dressing-table, and mother-of-pearl card-cases which had long since gone out of fashion ; and every Saturday regularly came a box of cut flowers. These delighted Amy more than anything else.

“Dear John never forgets to send me flowers every Saturday. No matter how busy he may be, he is not too busy to send these lovely roses to me.”

Poor Amy ! The regularity in the coming of the flowers was due to the florist. John gave him an order with instructions to send them “till forbid.” In his extravagant way he had paid for six months in advance. Paying in advance was not the usual habit of John Hurlstone. He was generally a long way behind with his bills. No matter how much money he had, he spent it quickly, and found himself in debt. He gave as an excuse that he miscalculated,—that he had thought one hundred dollars would do the work of two ; but it would not, and at the end of his first year in New York he was hopelessly in debt. His income was five thousand dollars, and he lived at the rate of twenty.

A day or two after the ball, he dropped in at the office of *The Dawn* on his way up-town to take Rush out to dinner with him. He was dressed in the latest fashion, and he appeared to advantage in his fine clothes. Rush, to whom John was always an object of interest, noticed that he had all the manners of a man-about-town, that he wore curious rings, and dressed in the English style. He seemed very glad to see Rush again, and was interested in his work. He asked to be introduced to two or three men in the room, and it was all Rush could do to keep him from inviting them out to dinner. As they were men Rush scarcely knew, he winked at John not to ask them when he saw that he was preparing to do so ; but he could not prevent his taking them over to the Astor House to have something to drink. After parting affectionately with them on the Astor House steps, John called a cab

that had been waiting for him, and they drove to "The Club," where he had ordered a dinner especially prepared and served in a private room. Rush asked what the place was, and was told that it was "Our Club." As Colonel Mortimer entered the room at this moment, he supposed John meant his and the colonel's, and took it for granted that it was a questionable place or the latter would not have anything to do with it. Rush despised Colonel Mortimer, and was never more pleased than when he found it was he whom he had knocked down at the masked ball. He wanted to confess the deed at once, but John, in whom he confided, begged him not to, saying it would be fatal to his interests. Rush did not tell John who the lady was whom Mortimer had annoyed, and his brother asked no questions.

It was very annoying to Rush that Colonel Mortimer was a guest at this little dinner, but there was nothing for it, and he had to be polite on his brother's account. Mortimer could be very agreeable when he tried, and this was one of the occasions on which he had laid himself out to please. He told amusing anecdotes of the war and of the world, and Rush was entertained in spite of himself. "He's not half a bad fellow," said John, when Mortimer left the room for a moment. "You will like him better when you know him better."

It was nine o'clock when this little dinner came to an end. Fortunately, it was Rush's night off at the office, for he did not feel very much like working for three or four hours over a desk in a stuffy room. John proposed that they should walk around Madison Square, and the three sauntered out. On their way they stopped at a florist's, where John ordered a basket of pink and white roses.

"For the same party, sir?" asked the florist.

"Yes; and send them at once, please," answered John. And, taking a card from his card-case, he enclosed it in a small envelope and addressed it. The three walked on again. When they reached Union Square, John said, as though seized by a sudden inspiration, "Let's go to the opera. It is 'Faust' to-night; and there is a good ballet, you know. I'm more than fond of a good ballet."

Rush was at first ready to embrace his brother for the suggestion; but he could not bear the idea of going to see Helen Knowlton, particularly in such a rôle as Marguerite, in company with Colonel Mortimer: so he answered,—

"We're not dressed for the opera, John. if we were, I should be delighted to go."

"Hang dress!" answered John. "We'll buy admission-tickets, and stroll in the lobby till the ballet comes on. Here's Fourteenth Street. Left wheel, march!"

They were soon inside the lobby, and, to John's delight, the *corps de ballet* was just coming down the stage. They stepped inside the glass doors and formed part of the crowd of men who fringed the wall.

Was there ever more delightful waltz-music written than that of "Faust"? Rush thought not; and I think so, too.

The dancing was encored, and Leoni, the *première*, came tripping down to the footlights to bow her acknowledgments of the applause. An usher jostled against Rush as he hurried down the aisle, bearing aloft a basket of pink and white roses. Leoni bowed low over the flowers, kissed them, and backed with the awkward steps of a ballet-dancer to the wings.

"Leoni gets a basket like that every night," whispered a confiding usher in Rush's ear. "Some feller's dead gone on her, no mistake."

"Who is the man?" asked Rush, knowing very well who had sent the flowers.

"I don't know; but they say he's powerful rich, and would marry Leoni if she'd have him. She won't have anything else, he can bet his life on that." And the usher stopped talking to join in the applause as Helen Knowlton came down the stage.

I need hardly say that Rush was interested in the usher's information. He could not help smiling at the idea of John marrying the ballet-dancer with his engagement to Amy Bayliss on his hands. He didn't even believe that he knew her, but merely thought it was one of his fancies to be known as a patron of the ballet to the extent of sending flowers to the *première danseuse*. The dancing was hardly over, when John proposed going, and, as Rush was his guest, he had to go too, though he did so with great reluctance. John suggested that they should return to "The Club;" and to "The Club" they accordingly returned.

"There is some interesting playing here of an evening," said John, as they entered the gilded saloon; "you will be amused to watch it. These fellows play high some nights,—eh, colonel?"

The colonel smiled, and they sauntered up to the table and watched the game in progress. As it grew exciting, John said that he would throw five dollars on the red, "just for the fun of the thing," and the red won. He left his money there, and still won.

"Why don't you take your money while the luck is with you?" said Rush.

"It will do better than that. I'll leave it there and show you." But the luck did not last very long, and before the evening was over John had lost five hundred dollars.

"I'll have my revenge to-morrow night," said he, good-naturedly, "and win it all back and more too."

Rush looked at his watch. It was two o'clock, and he felt ashamed of himself for having come from the presence of Helen Knowlton to spend the evening in such a place. He knew that she detested anything like fastness in a man, and that she would be thoroughly disgusted if she knew that he was spending an evening in the company of gamblers, for he realized now that "The Club" was nothing more nor less than a gaming-house. He noticed with pain John's familiarity with the place, and put it all down to the corrupting influence of Colonel Mortimer, so loath was he to think that John could go unled among such men. Rush had no maudlin sentiment on the subject: it was not from any religious scruples that he disliked gambling, but because of what he knew of its hurtfulness. The victims he looked upon with pity, and the victimizers with disgust. John was in a fair way of being ruined, but Rush knew there was no use in speaking to him on the subject. He would not get angry and fly into a passion, but he would laugh good-naturedly and tell Rush that losing a few dollars at cards was not going to hurt him, and that he didn't propose to follow gambling as a profession, but only as an occasional pastime. It would have been easier to argue with a more violent man, for John only laughed off words of warning and advice.

Seeing Leoni at the Academy reminded Rush that he had not been very attentive to her of late, and, as she had been a friend in the hour of need, he upbraided himself for not having called upon her, and vowed that he would do so at the earliest opportunity. Fearful lest John should go back to the gaming-table, he proposed walking home with him, and the brothers left "The Club" together. John had rooms in Twentyninth Street, and when they arrived at the door he insisted upon Rush going in with him, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. "In for a penny, in for a pound," said John, gayly. Rush was astonished at the splendor of the rooms. Everything that a luxurious taste could suggest for a bachelor's comfort was to be found there, from a well-stocked buffet to a well-trained valet.

"Why, John, you live like a prince," said Rush, looking around in admiration.

"Say rather like a stockholder in the Mutual Dividend Mining Company: that beats the princes, Rush." Then, taking a dainty decanter from the buffet, he poured out a small glass of old brandy. "There, there's something to warm the cockles of your heart! Drink that, and tell me if it isn't good!"

Rush tossed it down, and declared that he had never tasted better.

"And you never will, unless you taste it here. Mortimer has a

corner on that brandy," said he, filling his glass, "and no one else can get it."

Rush's eyes roamed about the apartment, seeing new beauties every moment, until they rested on a large colored photograph of Leoni standing on an easel. "Hello!" said he, "there's a portrait of Leoni! Do you know her, John?"

"Why should I know her?" said John, rather shortly. "Must a man know every ballet-dancer whose picture he happens to have?"

"Of course not; but this portrait is so conspicuous a feature of your room I thought it quite likely you knew the original."

"Your reasoning is childish, Rush," answered John, restored to his usual good humor. "Leoni is the popular dancer of the hour; she is a very pretty woman, and I adore pretty women. What more natural, then, than that I should have her picture, particularly as any one can enjoy the same privilege by paying its price? It's early yet," continued John, as the clock on the mantel chimed the hour of three: "what do you say to a cigar and some more brandy?" He filled both glasses, tossed off his own, and pushed the other towards Rush, who declined.

"No, thank you, John. This won't do for me. I don't want to wake up with a headache to spoil the memory of our pleasant evening. Good-night, old boy; sleep well. Let us see more of each other, John, now that we are together. Good-night."

"Good-night, Rush; you shall see more than you want of me. Pleasant dreams." And they shook hands and parted.

As Rush walked home in the cool morning air he thought over the events of the evening. He was not at all satisfied about the Leoni matter. He felt that John had not told him all he knew of the dancer, and his heart was stirred to pity for the girl, for he knew that John's fascinations for women were irresistible. He never for a moment thought but that Amy Bayliss still held sway over his brother's heart, and his pity was all for Leoni.

(To be continued.)

THE ODALIK.

BESIDE the fountain's marble brim
With languid steps she comes to stand ;
The snowy swans before her swim,
And catch the dainties from her hand.

Her arm rests on a porphyry vase,
And from the long and heavy plumes
Of that rich fan which screens her face
Float faint and delicate perfumes.

On each slim ankle and white wrist
The bangles chime like tiny bells ;
About her, like an azure mist,
Her fluttering mantle sinks and swells.

A dreamy music fills the air,
The fountain tinkles in the sun,
The watchful swans, with stately care,
Glide slowly past her, one by one.

Her brodered garments round her flow,
And half reveal the charms they veil ;
Within her jetty tresses glow
The gems that make the sunlight pale.

Her eyes look far away ; she heeds
No longer those who seek her alms,—
Not e'en that bolder one who pleads
With beak against her velvet palms.

Lo, as she stands, what sudden flame
Is kindled o'er her brow and cheek ?
Alas, the memory of her shame !
She is the favorite odalik.

James B. Kenyon.

PROFESSOR WEISHEIT'S EXPERIMENT.

I.

A BURMESE idol, in a shrine of teak-wood, elaborately carved, stood on Professor Weisheit's table, and seemed placidly to contemplate his labors. It was the sole companion of the wise man's solitude; and he was in the habit of occasionally addressing remarks to it. The idol had never been known to make any audible reply: it was made throughout of ebony and ivory, and was richly gilded. But the Professor may have had supersensuous means of communicating with it: he was in all respects a personage of exceptional attainments and powers.

The darksome wall-hangings of the Professor's room, the deep-toned Oriental rugs that covered the floor, and the gloomy hue of the ancient leather-bound volumes in the mahogany bookcase, united to produce a sombre impression, which the single window scarcely served to illuminate. This window was set in a broad and deep embrasure, panelled with black-oak, and shaped above in a Gothic arch. It was here that the Professor's table was placed, so that a clear light always rested upon it. Sitting at the table, in his roomy and fantastically-carved oaken chair, he had the light upon his left; and when he turned to receive a visitor, his face was in shadow. The visitor's countenance, on the contrary, was exposed to the full effulgence of the rays from the window; and when to this was added the quiet but awful scrutiny of the Professor's eyes, the visitor was apt to fancy himself little better than a transparency. The Burmese idol alone could return Professor Weisheit's gaze without flinching; but it must not be forgotten that its eyes had the advantage of being made of gold enamel, with diamond pupils.

The Professor admitted the outside world to his privacy between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning. How he was occupied during the remainder of the twenty-four hours no one knew. But—inasmuch as these events occurred more than a century ago—I am able to state that he was just then conducting researches into the nature of the connection between the soul and the body. On this particular morning he had been dissecting a brain. It was the brain of his intimate and trusted friend, Dr. Gedechniss. The renowned Doctor had died the day previous, bequeathing to the Professor the contents of his headpiece. The understanding had been that the Doctor, at the moment of decease, was to fix his mind strongly upon a certain problem which he and the Professor had long been investigating. It was hoped that, in the enlightenment which the soul receives at death, the changes thus produced

in the ganglion-cells of the first order would reveal to the Professor the solution of the secret. Possibly, no intellectual operation that the Doctor had ever accomplished was likely to be so fruitful of interesting results as was this post-mortem one.

II.

Since early dawn the Professor had been at work; and now a door opened in the silver face of the tall clock in the corner; a little white owl emerged from it and hooted the hour,—three-quarters past nine. The wise man laid down his instruments, leaned back in his chair, fixed his eyes upon the idol, and smiled thoughtfully.

"How simple it is," he said, in a quiet tone, "and yet what a revelation! We were not mistaken: this key of memory unlocks every door. By a few passes, and a word or two, I may cause this iron prison of individuality to dissolve, like wax in the furnace. And then, what becomes of man, with his pride of personality and his laborious edifice of character? The murderer, his hands yet dripping with his brother's blood, may be invested with the stainless innocence of an infant. The gross swineherd in his hut may, in a moment, enter into all the learning of Aristotle and Bacon. Ay, and the passionate lover, burning but now to lay down his life for his mistress's smile, may, in a breath, turn from her with indifference or disgust; the new-made wife and mother deny the infant and the husband that her heart had idolized; and friends smite each other as enemies, and enemies embrace as friends. And all because I—by a corollary of the principle that my friend Mesmer claims to have discovered—am able to transfer from one brain to another the subtle modifications wrought in this gray substance by the events and experiences of a lifetime! But can this be the whole mystery of the soul?"

The Burmese idol answered not. But the crafty grin which was stamped upon its features seemed to widen a little, as if its ivory and ebony sense of humor were tickled by the question.

After a pause the Professor resumed, in a graver tone: "Let us not be hasty. Events are nothing in themselves, but only in their effects upon the spirit: memory is but the metaphysical analogue of time. Each special act or thought is, indeed, but the logical outcome of all that have preceded it; and, by obliterating or transferring the consciousness of these, the conditions of the future may be altered. But is there not a force or essence anterior to all experience? And can this be annulled or changed by alterations of the material on which it acts? If, then, this psychic essence be immutable and inaccessible, of what avail to vary the outward environment of its action? The results could

be but temporary,—a matter of an hour or a day,—and then this inevitable soul would begin to build anew on the former foundations and to similar issues. Character is a product of spiritual chemistry,—the soul assimilating its circumstances; and, by the chemical law of affinity, the soul assimilates only what belongs to it. Whatever, therefore, is arbitrarily forced upon it effects but a temporary derangement. If in the brain of a hero I substitute for his own memory the memory of a coward, his next act will still be brave, and not cowardly.

“And yet, once more, I know not! One must not trust overmuch to theory. A few practical experiments would be more edifying. And doubtless, amidst the rabble which daily resorts to me for the help which (did they but know it) lies only in themselves, I might find material enough. We will have nothing tragic; a little comedy will do as well. And, in good time, here they come!”

III.

The white owl hooted thrice three times and once more, and a heavy curtain which concealed the door-way at the farther end of the apartment was thrown back. A servant made his appearance, whose complexion and costume bespoke him a native of India. He crossed his hands upon his breast, and stood with his head bowed.

“What is it, Chunder?” inquired the Professor, in Sanscrit.

“May it please your Excellency,” the other replied, “a young maiden seeks audience with you.”

“Give ear, now, Chunder, to what I shall direct,” resumed the Professor. “You will admit to-day four persons, and no more. Such of them as are women you will conduct, after the audience, to the saloon on the right, and deliver them into the charge of the female attendant who officiates there. Let her divest them of their garments and clothe them with the black robes of meditation, and let her then lead them each into a darkened cell, there to await my pleasure. Such of them as are men you will conduct to the saloon on the left, and cause them to be disposed in like manner. When all is done, let them be brought to the Chamber of Incense, where I will await them. Have you understood me?”

“My lord has spoken,” replied Chunder, bowing low. “His commands are written upon my soul.”

“It is well,” said the Professor. “Let the maiden be admitted.”

IV.

The slender and graceful figure of a beautiful girl, dressed in the picturesque costume of that age and country, now advanced timidly

between the curtains of the door-way, and paused just within the threshold.

"Come forward, my child, and be seated," said the Professor, kindly; and when she had taken her place in the chair opposite the window, he gazed in her modest and blushing face, and added, "Methinks it is from friends, rather than enemies, that you should wish to be delivered. Speak; what is your name and errand?"

"I am called Priscilla," replied the girl, in a sweet, tremulous voice, "and I am very unhappy. There is a man who wants to marry me; and, as he is very rich, my parents desire me to accept him. But I care neither for him nor for his money; and rather than marry him I would die—unless you can help me!"

"Is this man young and handsome?" asked the Professor, gravely.

"No, indeed! He is old and ugly," she exclaimed; "and he grew rich by usury!"

"Nevertheless, wealth is a mighty advantage in this world," said the Professor, "and such men as you describe have, ere now, found women to marry them, and to love them, too."

"But it is not only that I don't love him," rejoined Priscilla, drooping her eyelids and blushing deeply. "I will never marry, unless—unless——"

"Unless you can marry the young and handsome man whom you do love, and who loves you."

"Oh, that is my trouble! He does not love me," cried Priscilla, hiding her face in her hands and beginning to cry.

The Professor shook his head. "I fear you have been imprudent. Have you a rival in his affections?"

"Oh, and such a rival!" sobbed Priscilla. "She's sixty at least, and as homely as she can be, if she *has* got money; and 'tis said she snubs him, too! though I don't see how any one could do that."

Perhaps the Professor smiled; but, if so, Priscilla did not see it, for his face was in shadow, and she was blinded by her tears. Presently he said, "This is all very irregular. I ought to scold you and send you home to your parents. However, I will think it over, and see whether anything can be done. Meanwhile, go whither my servant will conduct you, and act according to the instructions you will receive. You will see me again hereafter."

Priscilla having vanished, Chunder announced a new visitor. This was a man between fifty and sixty years of age, of an aspect which could not be called prepossessing. The unkempt gray hair bristling round his head, his threadbare coat and small-clothes stained with grease and patched here and there, his bony and hairy hands, and the

pair of heavy silver-bowed spectacles that he wore across his coarse and ill-formed features, all combined to give him a very frowzy and unwholesome appearance. As he seated himself in the chair, he pulled from his waistcoat-pocket a huge horn snuff-box, and took a great pinch of its contents.

"Whom have I the pleasure of addressing?" asked the Professor, courteously.

"Jabez Hogganuck," replied the visitor, in a harsh voice. "Born in this town, and always lived here. Raised myself from poverty to affluence; and few in this neighborhood, though I say it, can show a better balance at the banker's than I can."

"If you have already got the best of the world, why do you come to me?"

"What's the good of money without something to spend it on?" was the rich man's reply; "and what more sensible thing can a man buy than a wife? A man must have a son, too, to look after his business when he's gone. So I've taken up with a nice, tidy young creature, with a pretty face of her own; spoke to her parents, who expressed a proper feeling in the matter; but the girl herself (if you'll believe it) pretends she don't fancy me! Absurd, of course; but I take it all girls are absurd, till they get sense put into 'em. So I have come to you for a bit of advice. Forgot to say that there's some young rascalion whom she makes a pretext for refusing me. But that's all humbug. She hasn't the bad taste actually to prefer another man, be he who he may, to Jabez Hogganuck!"

"Is she the only woman who ever touched your heart?" asked the Professor.

"To put it in that way—yes. But I might have others for the asking. Why, there's a certain elderly female would give her eye-teeth (if she'd got any) to call me husband; wealthy, too. But that's how it is: in affairs of this sort a man can't dispense with sentiment. I want the girl, and not the widow; that's the short of it. What say you?"

The Professor seemed to meditate. "Are you in active business?" he asked, at length.

"I shall retire as soon as I've settled a transaction that has bothered me no little. You see, I'm charitably disposed, and 'tis my custom to make loans to folks in straitened circumstances, repayable with a small addition. But some young rake, who has ruined himself and wants to ruin others, came to my office t'other day in my absence, and got a thousand dollars through my clerk. But I draw the line at ruined men; and I should proceed for recovery at once, only, as ill luck would have it, I haven't the rogue's name."

"Did he give no receipt?"

"Ah! there it is. His receipt got substituted for our memorandum, and that, of course, has my name on it only."

"That is unfortunate," remarked the Professor. "But I will see what can be done. Step aside, and follow the directions you will receive, until I come to you.—Chunder," he added, "take charge of this gentleman, and then admit the next visitor."

The figure which now advanced was as distinguished for fastidious elegance as Mr. Hogganuck had been for the want of it. He was a handsome young man, with blond, curling hair, a satin-lined coat, silk stockings, and silver shoe-buckles. He held between his fingers a gold-knobbed ivory cane with a silken tassel, and from his lace-bordered handkerchief a delicate fragrance was dispersed about the room.

"What do you want with me?" demanded the Professor, rather curtly.

"My name is Florence De Luce," said the other, speaking with a slight lisp, indolently tossing back a lock of hair from his forehead; "and, to tell you the truth, my dear Professor, I'm in a deuce of a quandary. Though I've not been more imprudent than a young fellow of spirit ought to be, I've had the bad luck to be done out of my fortune; and, by way of recovering myself, I've been courting a rich widow. But, in order to approach her in a style befitting my rank and station, I negotiated a trifling loan from a usurer hereabouts, who now wishes to recall it, and is at this moment in pursuit of me. Thus, not only am I in peril of my liberty, but I'm cut off from my widow, who, I fear, will interpret my absence to my disadvantage; the rather, since I am informed that I've a rival in her affections, whose name I haven't learned, but who possesses the one advantage I lack,—unlimited cash. Meanwhile, I'm debarred from cashing my draft; and I beg of you, my dear Professor, either to help me foil this Shylock, or, at least, aid me to capture the widow."

"Is the widow your only salvation? Would no other lady accept you, poverty and all?"

Mr. Florence De Luce sighed. "As a man of the world, my dear Professor," he replied, "you know it is often our duty to subordinate impulse to higher considerations. There is such a young lady as you describe, who, I confess, has my tender regard, as I have hers, but who, alas! is scarcely better provided than myself with worldly goods. To marry her would thus be an injustice not less to myself than to her, and my judgment is fain to forbid what my affections enjoin."

"Perhaps," said the Professor, gravely, "you may live to discover that your affections would have been wiser guides than what you are

pleased to call your judgment. However, for reasons of my own, I will intercede with Destiny on your behalf. Meanwhile, put yourself under the guidance of my servant until you hear further from me." Mr. Florence De Luce stared, bowed, and retreated, leaving his fragrance behind him.

The fourth caller was not long in presenting herself,—an angular and aquiline female, of very uncertain age, though of the severity and energy of her aspect there could be no uncertainty whatever. Her bushy eyebrows almost met above a sharp nose, beneath which sallied forth a long bony chin. She wore a high turban and an immense hoop-skirt, and a profusion of rings and other ornaments decorated her person. Without awaiting an invitation, she seated herself in a chair, and, in a strident and voluble tone, began as follows:

"Good-morning, Professor; perhaps you know me? My name is Asfixia Crawley. My husband died a rich man; but where he had one dollar I now have three. Unlike most women,—and men too, for that matter,—I'm not a fool. I'm ambitious, and my ambition isn't satisfied yet. There's a man I mean to marry: he's not young, nor yet a beauty, but his income equals mine, if it doesn't surpass it. Our two fortunes, added together, will go far towards putting me in the position to which my capacity and energy entitle me. But there's no fool like an old fool, and his head has been turned by a doll-faced chit whose whole dowry wouldn't buy the ring off this finger. He would do better to take pattern by me. I've been pestered to death by a young idiot with a lisp and a scented handkerchief, who expects me to pay his debts for the pleasure of hearing him say he loves me; but the day I marry him will be the day I throw my money into the horse-pond. You're said to be a clever man, and I've come to know whether you can't do anything to make my intended see reason. Time is valuable: he'll have to come to it sooner or later; and the sooner the better."

"Madam," replied the Professor, with a bow, "you see things in a very sensible light, and I shall be happy to assist you. I have been expecting your visit, and have made the necessary arrangements for your reception. Be pleased to walk into the next room and observe the formalities which will be explained to you, and I will attend you presently."

"This falls out well," continued the Professor to himself, when he and the Burmese idol were again alone. "Fate has shown more than her usual perverse aptness. It only remains for me to play the cards she has put in my hands. Well for all human beings could they be taught the lesson which these four impassioned egotists are now about to learn! Yet I will be lenient: an hour shall be the limit of their

probation. After that they shall resume their proper identities ; and if by that time they have not blundered into a solution of their difficulties, I wash my hands of them."

The diamond eyes of the Burmese idol glittered mischievously. The white owl hooted the eleventh hour. The Professor arose, cast aside his embroidered mantle, and passed out through a concealed panel in the bookcase.

V.

The Chamber of Incense was dark ; the only light came through the circular window of stained glass in the zenith of the domed roof. The air was warm, and the odors that permeated it were sweet but enervating. On the circular divan in the centre of the apartment four figures were seated. Their outlines were scarcely discernible in the fragrant gloom, and they seemed to be unconscious of one another and of all about them. So far as could be seen, however, they seemed all to be draped in dark cloaks, which fell from their heads to their feet. A profound stillness brooded over everything.

At length, with a noiseless movement, another figure glided out of the obscurity at one end of the chamber, and advanced slowly towards the group. This latter figure seemed tall, and of a stately presence. Approaching the nearest of the seated forms, he appeared to lay his hands lightly on its head, at the same time pronouncing certain words, but in so subdued and monotonous a tone as to be indistinguishable ; they were scarcely more audible than the heavy breathing of the sleepers. As he spoke, however, a phosphorescent light became faintly discernible at a point within the square formed by the four divans, revealing the presence there of a large globe of solid crystal, mounted on a black tripod. As the magician passed to the second sleeper, and repeated his incantations, the light increased, flinging his tall shadow backwards against the wall ; and a confused movement of tiny shapes became visible within the substance of the globe. He moved to the third, and the mysterious lustre was still further augmented, and now the confused shapes became more distinct, and hurried hither and thither, like infinitesimal beings performing inscrutable avocations. But when he reached the fourth figure the light suddenly went out, with a snapping sound, and at the same moment each of the sleepers drew a deeper breath and stirred uneasily. A voice now spoke :

"Is my lord's charm complete?"

The answer came in low but imperative tones :

"All is ready. Now, listen. Return each one to the room from which the other was taken. The transformation must be complete

without as well as within. The maiden must become the woman; the youth, the man. Have you understood me?"

"Perfectly, my lord."

"So be it: and let them be dismissed separately."

Silence again reigned in the Chamber of Incense.

VI.

The first person to emerge from the portals of the Professor's mansion was a lady clad in a dress of figured silk, distended around her by a hoop of vast circumference. Her head-dress consisted of an anomalous agglomeration of satin, lace, and feathers, known in those days as a turban; and her fingers, neck, and wrists sparkled with jewels. The face appertaining to all this finery was young and pretty, but its effect was somewhat marred by a sour and dogmatic expression, and her gait and bearing were arrogant and unconciliating.

"Twelve o'clock, as sure as my name is Asfixia!" exclaimed she, as the hour was sounded from the cathedral turret. "Well, it serves me right for wasting precious time gadding after conjurers,—a pack of humbugs, one and all of 'em! The only wisdom one gets for one's trouble is the wisdom to keep away from 'em in future. I'd a deal better have been minding my own business: husbands aren't to be caught by proxy. I must look after my Jabez myself; and, by the bye, I have an idea that I fancy will settle him. Don't talk to me! 'tis money makes the mare go,—and the old horse too." She paused in her walk, put her finger beside her nose, and appeared to meditate. "I'll do it!" she said, at length, resuming her way. "I'll look in at the notary's: 'tis not far out of my way. And, if I'm not very much mistaken, the next thing I'll have to do will be to order my wedding-gown. Let me think—how shall I have it made?"

Meanwhile, a remarkable personage had followed the lady who called herself Asfixia down the Professor's steps. He was clad in the height of the mode; his gold-braided hat was cocked in the latest fashion, his embroidered coat was satin-lined, and his silver-buckled, high-heeled shoes formed an elegant termination to his white silk legs. A slender ivory cane dangled from his wrist, and a lace embroidered handkerchief protruded from his pocket. Looked at from behind, any one would have taken this individual to be a young dandy of the first water; but had the observer met him face to face he would have been startled, and would perhaps have felt disposed to smile. For the countenance of this dandy was harsh, coarse, and ill-featured to a degree; nor was its lack of refinement remedied by the absurdly affected grimace which it wore. His great rough hands, protruding from the lace wrist-bands,

looked as much out of place as a man's beard on a maiden's lip; nor was his sentimental and would-be youthful air more in keeping with his bristly gray hair and elderly aspect. His small, sinister eyes blinked and screwed themselves up strangely as he went along; and once or twice he raised his hand to his face and made a motion as if to settle a pair of spectacles on his nose, but, finding none there, he hastily withdrew his fingers, with a puzzled expression. He now seemed to fall into a mood of deep preoccupation, in the midst of which he began to grope for something in his pockets. Anon he fished out a small gold box of smelling-salts, which, without looking at it, he opened, and, taking a pinch of the contents, thrust it up his nostrils. The effect was, of course, disastrous; he spluttered, stamped, and shook his ugly head, and the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Deuce take me!" he cried, in a harsh tone, strangely modified by a mincing pronunciation, "I believe I must be insane. What could possess me to use my smelling-salts as snuff? Snuff, indeed! Pray, when did I ever touch the nasty stuff? And yet, it's deuced odd, but I really felt as if I were in need of a pinch. 'Pon my soul, I believe that old conjurer has bewitched me. Florence De Luce take snuff! Abominable! And just when I was dreaming of my Asfixia, too. I really must get that draft cashed, whatever the risk. I think I noticed a notary's office down-town that seemed a likely place. If I can only continue to dodge that old scamp of a money-lender, I may be happy yet."

As he turned the corner, the Professor's door once more opened, and forth came another figure. At a distance, you would surely have taken him for that well-known personage, Jabez Hogganuck,—his shabby clothes, his greasy old hat, his massive, silver-bowed spectacles, and even the trick he had of occasionally giving a shake to his head, as if refusing some impecunious applicant a loan. But, as he drew near, you would have been puzzled to observe that the face beneath the greasy hat was comely and youthful, and that the hands that emerged from the frayed coat-sleeves were white and delicate. Surely Jabez had undergone a marvellous rejuvenation. And yet, again, when you remarked the calculating and impenetrable glance of the handsome blue eyes and heard the uncompromising and ungracious accents of the voice, you would have asked yourself whether the old usurer were not here in spirit, if not in body, after all.

Mr. Hogganuck, then (if it were he), came down the street with a heavy step that seemed inconsistent with the active proportions of his figure, which his awkward garments could not wholly disguise, and thumping the pavement every other moment with his thick walking-

stick. He had not proceeded far before he stopped, removed the spectacles from his nose, and rubbed his eyes vigorously with a dingy pocket-handkerchief.

"What ails me, I'd like to know?" muttered he, gruffly. "Can't see the length of my staff. Is it my eyes have given out, or is something wrong with my spectacles? Worn 'em for twenty years, and they never failed me yet. Wonder, now, if that rascally juggler, with his solemn airs, hasn't been playing some trick on me. Confound him! I'll buy up all his paper, and turn him into the street! Some deviltry at work, that's certain. What would my Priscilla say if her future husband couldn't see to put the ring on her finger? And that puts me in mind—I may as well get the papers drawn up, and settle ten thousand on her right away. Once get her busy buying her wedding-outfit, and she'll soon stop all that nonsense about that young spark of hers. And then, too, I must take my measures to catch the impudent rake who got off with my money. Humph! a notary! That's what I want. Can get it all done there. Where's my smelling-salts,—snuff-box, I mean?" He produced the well-worn horn receptacle from his pocket, hesitated a moment, and then, holding it up to his nose, gave a deep inhalation. The pungent dust flew to its destination, and the semblance of Mr. Hogganuck, with a frightful convulsion of his features, followed by several crashing sneezes, dashed the box violently on the ground, and plunged snorting into a neighboring apothecary's shop.

Meanwhile, the Professor's abode had disgorged still another victim,—a slender and shrinking apparition, holding in one hand the skirts of a high-waisted, lavender-colored gown, and with the other drawing a delicate veil over her features. She looked, at the first glance, like the ideal of blushing maidenhood; and one begrudged the semi-transparent medium of the veil for obscuring even so slightly the radiance of her lovely countenance. A more penetrating glance, however, would have somewhat modified this impatience on the spectator's part. The veil would then have seemed to reveal too much rather than too little; for there was nothing alluring about the long, sharp nose, the grizzly eyebrows overhanging the beady gray eyes, the sunken and withered cheeks, and the peaked and salient chin. In short, this shy, lavender-robed damsel was nothing but an unsightly old crone ridiculously masquerading in girlish attire. Her would-be elastic gait was marred by the ungainly halt of chronic rheumatism; and what should have been her dimpled and rosy-tipped fingers were an array of skinny talons, better fitted to scratch faces or to claw money than to receive and return the gentle pressure of love.

Nevertheless, she herself appeared to be under no misgiving as to

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the harmony of her inward with her outward person. She hobbled along with a languishing air, and avoided the glances of the passers-by as coyly as if she held treasures of bewitching beauty in reserve. And what was this that she was murmuring to herself,—if her croaking whisper may properly be described as a murmur?

"Ah, Priscilla, what an unhappy girl art thou! The good Professor was kind, but how can he have power to change the hearts of human beings! Nay, I must make one more effort, on my own account, to escape the tyranny of fate. I am sure that Florence loves me; and, if I could but be united to him, that dreadful Hogganuck would at least be powerless to undo the knot. Poor Florence does not care for that Asfixia woman; it is only his sense of honor that induces him to marry her, in order that his debts can be paid. But I have a thousand dollars in my own right, which he knows nothing of. Surely, if I sign this over to him, it will solve the difficulty, and then nothing can prevent our happiness. I will not delay a moment. I will go to the nearest notary, and he will assist me. Strange I did not think of this before! Oh, Florence, dearest Florence, forgive the stupidity of thy Priscilla!"

She hastened onward, as fast as her infirmities would allow, and with all the fervor of innocent self-sacrifice palpitating in her heart.

VII.

Precisely as the clock struck twelve, a tall man, muffled up in a cloak, entered the notary's office by a side door. From beneath the folds of the cloak he produced a sort of box or casket, made of some dark wood, curiously carved. This he placed on end upon the shelf of the desk-table, and, touching a spring, the front part of the casket opened, revealing within the figure of a Burmese idol, cunningly wrought of ebony and ivory, and heavily gilt. Then the notary—for such he seemed to be—hung his cloak and hat upon a nail, and, seating himself at the desk, began to write, in a mechanical, business-like manner; in a ponderous ledger. He had not written three lines, when the office door opened and a customer came in, who announced herself as Asfixia Crawley, and whom we are forced to accept as such upon her own testimony.

"My dear madam," remarked the notary, laying down his pen, "you are too well known to need any introduction. How can I serve you?"

"Something the like of which you're not often called on to transact," replied the lady, with a snicker. "I want to give away ten thousand dollars."

"No one can know your own business better than you do, madam," answered the notary, calmly. "In whose favor shall the deed of gift be drawn?"

"Jabez Hogganuck is the name of the individual," said the lady, concisely.

"I am acquainted with the gentleman," the notary observed; "but I was not aware that he was in need of pecuniary assistance."

"Pecuniary encouragement is the phrase," returned the other; "and, to put your mind at rest, I may tell you that he wouldn't be getting it if I didn't intend to become Mrs. Hogganuck."

The notary bowed, took some printed forms from a drawer, and began to fill up one of them. While he was thus engaged, a new customer entered,—no other, indeed, than the gentleman whom we have just heard apostrophize himself as Florence De Luce.

"Mr. Notary, I have dropped in——" he began. Then he caught sight of the lady, and stopped short, involuntarily feeling for a pair of spectacles that were not there. "Why, bless my heart!" he continued; "surely I have the felicity of addressing the charming Mrs. Crawley? or—no—good gracious, what an extraordinary disguise! Have I lost my senses, or is this my poor little Priscilla?"

"Your poor little Priscilla, indeed!" cried the lady thus addressed, bridling up in great indignation. "You ought to know better, Jabez Hogganuck, than to speak that way of a chit not old enough to be your grandchild! Don't 'Priscilla' me, if you please! Though, to be sure, what is one to expect of an old fellow who will go and rig himself out in silks and embroidery like a dancing-master?"

"'Pon my soul, my dear girl, I don't understand you," exclaimed the gentleman. "So far from being Jabez Hogganuck, the old villain is after me at this moment to get back his draft,—which, by the bye, Mr. Notary, I wish you'd kindly discount for me.—And as for you, my poor child, you are Priscilla just as sure as I'm Florence De Luce."

"Sakes alive, the man is mad!" cried his interlocutor, recoiling. "The poor dear old duckie's brain has given way at last. I always said he was overtaxing himself with the care of that business; and there's no one could take that care off his shoulders so well as I could. —Jabez, dear," she continued, adopting a soft and soothing tone, "don't act so strange to your Asfixia. Call me what you like,—Priscilla, if nothing else will do you: it makes no difference, so long as I'm going to change my name for yours anyway."

"If any one's mad, it certainly isn't I," muttered Florence, scratching his gray head in great perplexity. "Singular I never heard of any

insanity in her family. Gad, it's very lucky I didn't allow my emotions to get the better of my judgment,—in spite of that old magician."

"There, there, Jabez; don't get excited, dear," the lady went on. "What do you suppose I've just done for you? I've made over ten thousand dollars to you, for a nice little present on our wedding-day."

"You—ten thousand dollars—to me!" cried he; and then he burst into a laugh. "Why, bless the girl! You never saw a tenth part of the money in your life."

"Be calm, love, be calm," returned she; "and if you don't believe it, ask the notary."

"Do you hear what she says?" demanded he, turning to the latter.

"It is no less than the truth, sir," the notary replied, quietly. "Here are the papers: I have just finished making them out."

"In that case," cried the other, "she may be Asfixia, or what she pleases; and I am ready to marry her this very day."

But at this juncture appeared in the door-way the dingy coat and breeches of Jabez Hogganuck, their wearer peering ineffectively through his huge spectacles and pioneering his way with his heavy stick.

"Good-day, Mr. Notary," said he, gruffly; "I suppose you know me,—Jabez Hogganuck. I want you to draw up a paper settling the sum of ten thousand dollars on my intended wife,—Miss Priscilla——"

"What's that you are saying about Miss Priscilla being your intended wife, sir?" demanded the gentleman known as Florence De Luce, strutting up to him. "I'd have you to know, sir, that the young lady is promised to me; and any man——"

"And who the mischief *are* you, sir?" inquired the other, confronting him.

"Florence De Luce, at your service," was the reply.

"Florence De Luce? By the bye, now I hear the name, you're the very man I'm after. I charge you, sir, with illegally defrauding me of the sum of a thousand dollars. If you resist, I'll call a constable."

"Take your lucre," responded the gentleman thus threatened, at the same time snatching from the desk the money which the notary had placed there in exchange for the draft. "Let me inform you, sir, that I am now a man of fortune, and I never let the ink on my I. O. U.'s get dry."

"Jabez, dear," here interposed the voice of the lady, "seems to me I wouldn't do that. A thousand dollars is a sum of money, after all; and the man you're giving it to is no more Jabez Hogganuck than you are Florence De Luce. When you come back to your right senses you'll be sorry."

The wearer of the dingy clothes, however, thrust the money into his pocket with a grunt of satisfaction, and then turned to the last speaker. "You called me by name, ma'am," he said; "but I'm taking the money, not giving it.—How's this?" he ejaculated suddenly; "Asfixia Crawley! that's her hoop, for certain; but the voice——" He pulled off his spectacles. "No," he went on; "as I hope to be saved, it's my Priscilla! What made you go and get into Asfixia's clothes, my dear?"

"Speak for yourself, Master Florence De Luce," retorted she, with a scornful intonation. "If my future husband wasn't off his head, he wouldn't have demeaned himself to exchange wardrobes with a jack-in-the-box like you; nor would he let the man go unpunished who had the impudence to call Asfixia Crawley out of her name."

"Why do you look at me, my pretty one, when you are talking to Florence De Luce?" inquired the shabby-coated lover. "Now that I look at him," he added, "he's a considerable older man than I'd been given to suppose; but there's something about his face that seems familiar."

"I was just about to remark, my love," said the gentleman in the white silk stockings, "that this Jabez Hogganuck, of whom I've heard so much, seems to be a very youthful Shylock, instead of an elderly one; though he's none the less a rascal, I doubt not. But really, my pet, it would save a great deal of confusion if you would give up this nonsense about your being Asfixia: you see he recognized you as soon as I did."

"Listen to me, Priscilla," interposed the other, shouldering his rival aside: "I'll soon make you hear reason. The notary here is at this moment recording my gift to you of ten thousand dollars to buy your wedding-outfit with. Doesn't that soften your heart towards your Jabez?"

"I don't believe a word of it," replied the lady.

"Ask the notary," was the answer.

"There is no doubt about it, madam," said that functionary, composedly. "Here it is, in black and white, just as I have written it down."

"Well, sir," observed she, "I confess I didn't know that you possessed that amount of money. But I suppose you've a right to do what you please with it: so I will accept it, and buy a wedding-outfit with it, and marry Jabez Hogganuck into the bargain. But I won't marry you."

"She will marry me," put in he of the silk stockings; "though I'm not Jabez Hogganuck."

"She will marry Jabez Hogganuck," exclaimed the shabby one,—
"and that's me; but if it pleases her to call me Florence De Luce she's welcome."

"How comes she to mistake you for me?" demanded the other.

"If she must give you a false name, I wish she'd choose some other than mine," retorted his rival.

"You're both of you beside yourselves, and the proof of it is your mistaking a respectable widow-woman for a slip of a girl hardly out of her pinafores," was the lady's contribution to the dispute. And, just as the words left her mouth, the damsel in the lavender gown hobbled into the office.

At first she paid no attention to the group of customers in the farther end of the apartment, but addressed herself to the notary.

"If you please, sir," she said, "I'm a poor, unfortunate girl: my name is Priscilla. I'm very much attached to a young gentleman named Florence De Luce, who is in trouble for want of a little money to pay his debts. I've brought a thousand dollars, which is of no use to me; and I want you, if you will be so kind, to find him and put it into his hands. Can you manage it for me?"

"Your directions shall be obeyed, miss," replied the impassive notary; "but the gentleman you have designated happens to be at this moment in the office: you might transact the business yourself."

The damsel turned, and advanced timidly towards the two gentlemen, her veil being still drawn over her face. He in the satin-lined coat was nearest, and she touched him on the arm and faltered out, "Florence—dear Florence—is that you?"

He faced about and stared at her. "Halloo! what's this?" he exclaimed, dumfounded. "Another Priscilla! If this goes on, 'twill be the death of me."

"Another Priscilla, sure enough!" cried the threadbare gentleman. "Stop a moment, though: let's have a look behind that veil."

"Oh, you are Florence!" exclaimed the damsel, turning to the last speaker. "But why have you and Mr. Hogganuck put on each other's things?"

"That is not Priscilla's voice," said both gentlemen in a breath. "Who are you?"

"Why, don't you know me?" she returned, shyly, and lifted her veil.

"Asfixia Crawley!" cried they both again.

"What's the matter now?" asked the lady in the hoop and turban, coming forward.

The gentlemen drew back: the two ladies were left face to face.

"What do you mean by looking like me?" at last demanded she of the turban, in an angry tone.

"I don't know what you mean, madam," replied the lavender damsel, shrinkingly; "but indeed, when I look at you, I could believe I was looking in the mirror."

"Why, you frightful old harridan, how dare you libel my lovely Priscilla in that manner?" called out the silk-stockinged gentleman.

"Whom are you calling a frightful old harridan?" cried the turbaned lady, flushing up to the roots of her hair.

"Oh, this is too much!" he gasped out, clapping his hands to his head.

"For that matter, they both seem to be in the same story," observed the other gentleman, in a bewildered tone.

The lavender damsel bowed her head and burst into tears.

There is no telling what might have happened. But at this crisis the notary arose, and rapped loudly on his desk with the office-ruler.

VIII.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the notary, in a serene but authoritative tone, "what is all this disturbance about?"

"These two gentlemen are both of them out of their senses," replied the turbaned lady, excitedly. "They insist that I am Priscilla; and this woman, who calls herself Priscilla, is no such thing, but has got herself up to look like me. It's a conspiracy, and I'll have the law of every one of them."

"For some reason best known to themselves," said the silk-stockinged gentleman, gesticulating with his ivory cane, "these two ladies and this young usurer all pretend that I myself am the usurer; and Priscilla and Asfixia have agreed to exchange names and dresses."

"What he says about the ladies is true enough," said the shabby gentleman, striking the floor emphatically with his staff; "and, so far as I know, he is the person he describes himself to be. But he has no business to call a gentleman as old as himself (and that's sixty at least) a young usurer; and why a pretty girl like Priscilla there should rig herself out in the satins and diamonds of that old witch," pointing to the lavender damsel, "or why *she* should be ogling about in the guise of an unsophisticated maiden, is more than I can understand."

"I don't know what these gentlemen mean by calling me old, when I am hardly seventeen," said the lavender lady through her tears; "and I intend no harm in saying that this lady looks like me, for I'm sure I think her very young and pretty. But of course she can't be Asfixia Crawley, any more than I am."

"'Pon my soul," cried the silk-stockinged gentleman, "if it wasn't that Priscilla supported you in it, I'd have you arrested for defamation for saying you resembled her! It would be nearer the mark to say that yonder young Shylock looks like me. Now that I think of it, and allowing for his lack of a certain distinction that characterizes me, the resemblance is quite remarkable."

But at this both the ladies exclaimed in chorus, "Oh, what a story!" And she in the turban added that he ought to have more self-respect than to liken himself to that smooth-faced young noodle; while she in lavender declared that a hedgehog might as well say he looked like a greyhound.

"Much obliged to you, my good woman," returned the gentleman described as a greyhound; "but my days of vanity are over, and the old fellow there certainly does feature me to some extent, though his silly expression is all his own."

"You seem to be all in some perplexity," observed the notary, a grave smile lurking behind his penetrating eyes; "but, before attempting to settle that, let us attend to business for a moment. I have some papers here that require your signatures. You," nodding to the turbaned lady, "wish to give ten thousand dollars to the gentleman calling himself Florence De Luce?"

"Yes. But I call him Jabez Hogganuck," she replied.

"You," continued the notary, turning to the shabby gentleman, "wish to give the same sum to the lady calling herself Asfixia?"

"I do," he assented; "but everybody knows she's Priscilla."

"You," the notary proceeded, glancing at the lady in lavender, "desire to present Florence De Luce with a thousand dollars?"

"Yes; to the real Florence, that is," was her answer.

"And you," concluded the notary, addressing the two gentlemen, "have already settled the transaction between yourselves. All that is needed is Mr. Hogganuck's name to the receipt."

They both nodded.

"Now, as regards the question of identity," pursued the notary, "the law is bound, as a matter of form, to accept each individual's statement concerning himself or herself; and these papers have been filled out accordingly. But, in order to satisfy all differences, each of you shall sign the paper for the other. Thus, the gentleman calling himself Florence De Luce shall sign the name of Hogganuck to that gentleman's deed; the lady purporting to be Priscilla shall affix Mrs. Crawley's name to the latter person's document; and so with the rest. Are you agreed?"

The four customers looked a little bewildered; but the suggestion

seemed proper, and they ended by doing as the notary directed. The latter examined the signatures, to make sure they were correct, sanded them, and then handed the documents to their several owners.

"And now as to this curious dispute of yours," he said, letting his glance travel slowly from one to another. "May I inquire if any of you have ever visited a certain learned Professor who resides hereabouts?"

"Yes!" cried all four together.

"In that case, I am sorry to inform you that you have all been bewitched," returned the notary, quietly.

The four victims emitted groans and sighs of despair.

"But," he went on, "there is one person in the world who can relieve you from the spell; and that happens to be myself."

"Oh, save us—disenchant us—cure us—we will be indebted to you forever!" they all exclaimed.

"I will do so on one condition,—that you all solemnly engage not to undo anything that you may have done since you left the Professor's house. Were you to attempt to violate this engagement, the spell would at once return upon you, and could not then be removed."

Each of his hearers gave the required promise eagerly.

The notary thereupon stepped to a part of the office where a large curtain hung against the wall. He drew it aside, and disclosed a tall mirror, reaching to the floor.

"Let every one of you examine their reflections in this glass," he said. "It will reveal to each a truth otherwise undiscoverable."

They did as they were directed. There was a moment of silence; then a shout of consternation or astonishment went up from all.

"Is that hideous old gray-head me?" groaned the man in silk stockings.

"Am I that smooth-cheeked calf?" exclaimed the wearer of the threadbare coat.

"I certainly appear well preserved. But what an inane expression!" cried the lady in the turban.

As for the lady in lavender, she hid her face in her hands with a shriek and a shudder, and would have fallen had not the notary supported her to a chair. He then drew the curtain back across the mirror, and clapped his hands. A swarthy attendant appeared, bearing a large globe of the purest crystal, mounted on a tripod of ebony. He then closed the blinds of the window, so that the office was in darkness, save for a phosphorescent gleam proceeding from the crystal sphere.

"Let each of you place the right hand upon it," commanded the voice of the notary. They obeyed; and at the same moment the clock struck one.

"Be yourselves once more; and may this hour of madness sow in your hearts the seeds of wisdom!" said the voice.

Each of the four started, as from a strong electric shock. The room was light again: the sphere and the swarthy attendant had vanished, and the notary was quietly writing in the big ledger on his desk.

The customers gazed at one another curiously; but they said nothing. Something strange had certainly happened to them; but none of them had the confidence to make any comments or inquiries about it. Florence De Luce glanced wistfully at Jabez Hogganuck's satin-lined coat; the old usurer cast longing eyes at Mr. De Luce's silver-bowed spectacles; and the two ladies scrutinized each other's attire rather uneasily. But some inward monitor seemed to warn them that they had better hold their tongues. Finally, the two young people took each other by the arm and walked out of the office, followed by the two older ones; and, as they passed the notary's desk, they all exchanged a silent bow with him.

When he was alone again, he leaned back in his chair, and gazed up at the Burmese idol with a meditative smile. But of what he said to the idol, or of what the idol replied (if anything), no record has come down to us.

Julian Hawthorne.

A WOMAN'S KNOWLEDGE.

A ROSE to smell a moment, then to leave,
 Chance strain of song you smile at as you pass,
 Bubble that breaks before you lip the glass,
 Chain frail as the frail threads that spiders weave:—
 Oh, do not think that I myself deceive:
 Thus, and not otherwise, to you am I,—
 A moment's pleasure as you pass me by,
 Powerless, at best, to make you joy or grieve.

And you, to me, my sun-god and my sun,
 Who warmed my heart to life with careless ray!—
 Forever will that burning memory stay
 And warm me in the grave when life is done.
 What farther grace has any woman won?
 Since your chance gift you can *not* take away.

Louise Chandler Moulton.

THE POETRY OF THOREAU.

THE reader of "Rasselas" will remember that the happy prince met early in his journey the poet and traveller Imlac, who was a traveller and explorer of nature partly that he might be a poet. He had read "all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca." But, finding that the province of poetry is to describe nature and passion, and that no man can be great by imitation, he suddenly became a great observer of men and things. In the broad horizon which his catalogue of the things necessary for a poet to know implied, the prince was confounded, and cried out, before Imlac was half through with the narration, "Enough! thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet."

It would, doubtless, decimate the ranks of those who are presumed to be poets if Imlac's requirements should be strictly applied. But he is right to the extent that the poet is the one who sees, and who sees best and farthest. In respect to this one qualification, and the "careful study of all the appearances of nature," on which he also strongly insisted, it must be said that Thoreau's endowment was unique. Few paragraphs in his prose fail to prove the poetic attitude, and everything that he wrote, one may say, seems instinctive and alive with poetic impulse. Unlike Imlac, he stayed at home, or travelled mainly in fancy. Through this he speaks of reaching the "far Azores" and rounding many capes.

That much-abused word "transcendental" well describes him. He dwelt perpetually on the thing beyond and least obvious superficially. The apparition that hovered over or beckoned you away from the material substance was what attracted him, and his power of playing upon and picturing it was the source of his enchantment. He has shown that he can write good verses by the technical rules, but he cared little for them when they restricted or baffled his complete thought. He could not court the listless or holiday auditor. You must wrestle with his thought, as he did, to entertain it properly.

In shooting over the prescribed rhythmical moulds and paying at times little deference to the quality of his rhyme, he must deeply offend the sticklers for smooth polish and impeccable form; yet it is hard to escape the fact that he was, in his way, a poet of striking qualities. If his rhyme or rhythm did not always fit the expectancy of the ear, it did, at least, beat its music through the mind. The wave struck with irresistible force the waiting shore.

Somewhere, then, in that generic group which includes quite different species, I think we have a right to place Henry D. Thoreau. He did not set himself up for a poet; but poets are not made by intention, or else the world would be flooded with them. In the guild of poetry he who seeks a place the most earnestly sometimes does not find it, while to him who seeks it not it often comes.

Thoreau has said himself a variety of pertinent things about the poet and his production. He is, according to Thoreau, "no tender slip of fairy stock, who requires peculiar institutions or edicts for his defence, but the toughest son of earth and of heaven; and by his greater strength and endurance his fainting companions will recognize the God in him." The difference between poets and those who are not, he says, is that "the latter are unable to grasp and confront the thought which visits them." He asserts that "the poet will prevail to be popular in spite of his faults, and in spite of his beauties too. He will hit the nail on the head, and we shall not know the shape of his hammer." In this last sentence we get the very formula by which Thoreau must have always written, whether he essayed prose or verse.

He could not speak only as something spoke to him. He will hit the nail on the head, and make small effort to shape his hammer. "Orpheus," he says, "does not hear the strains which come from his lyre, but only those which are breathed into it." Of that subtile fabric which streams from the poet's instrument he writes as follows: "We are often prompted to speak our thoughts to our neighbors or the single travellers whom we meet on the road; but poetry is a communication from our home and solitude addressed to all Intelligence."

"His poetry might be bad or good," says Emerson, "but he had the source of poetry in his spiritual perception. . . . He was so enamoured of the spiritual beauty that he held all actual written poems in very light esteem in the comparison. . . . His own verses are often rude and defective. The gold does not yet run pure, is drossy and crude. The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey." But we do not seek in him "lyric fineness." He would probably, as Shakespeare says, "rather be a kitten and cry 'Mew!'" than be a "mincing ballad-monger." His whole thought had such a hold on that which was beyond the material investment that it floated habitually in the atmosphere of the poet. If he had not earned a full admittance to the Parnassian choir, and could not comply with their self-imposed limitations, he knew how to evoke, in his own fashion, the warm and cogent influence of their high strains.

Neither Thoreau, nor any of his friends for him, ever tried to bring his verses all together. They are to be found scattered up and down

his other writings, and many of them seem to be merely pendants to his prose discourse, dropped in as forcible epigrams, where they are brief, and, in other instances, made ancillary to the idea just expressed, or to perpetuate a distinct conception that has some vital connection with the point from which it was poured forth. It is, therefore, almost an injustice to them to treat them separately at all.

The largest group of his poems in any one place is the collection of nine only which Mr. Emerson added to his book of "Letters to Various Persons;" but these were culled from his previous volumes, and are given merely as samples of his muse, or were possibly Mr. Emerson's favorites.

Mr. Emerson's opinion had so much authority with Thoreau in the matter of poetry that he at one time, according to a statement which Mr. Sanborn has made in *The Critic*, "destroyed many of his verses" because they did not meet Mr. Emerson's approbation. The pieces thus lost were in manuscript, and had never yet come to the public; and no doubt, as Thoreau afterwards thought, they deserved a better fate.

Mr. Thoreau's expression was always so deep, significant, and sincere that it easily took on the hue and fervor of poetry, no matter how slovenly might be its form. If he seemed often perverse in his way of looking at things or in putting his ideas, "his riddles were worth the reading," as Mr. Emerson has well observed. Perhaps nothing is more common in his writings than the element of unexpectedness. He is a bracing and entertaining companion, because you never know where he is to begin or where his mood will land you. In the poem I copy below he describes

THE POET'S DELAY.

In vain I see the morning rise,
In vain observe the western blaze,
Who idly look to other skies,
Expecting life by other ways.

Amidst such boundless wealth without,
I only still am poor within:
The birds have sung their summer out,
But still my spring does not begin.

Shall I, then, wait the autumn wind,
Compelled to seek a milder day,
And leave no curious nest behind,
No woods still echoing to my lay?

There is a piece of blank verse with which he opens his "Report of the Natural History of Massachusetts" that is memorably good. In blank verse, which he handled passably well, and sometimes with perfection, he relished, I suspect, the freedom which dispensed with the trammels of rhyme. It is doubtful if Massachusetts, or any State, in fact, has ever issued, before or since, a public document containing so much good poetry as Thoreau put in this. It is in this paper that we find his fluent and graphic verses upon the swollen stream, a part of which we give below :

The river swelleth more and more,
Like some sweet influence stealing o'er
The passive town ; and for a while
Each tussock makes a tiny isle,
Where on some friendly Ararat
Resteth the weary water-rat.

* * * * *

Our village shows a rural Venice,
Its broad lagoons where yonder fen is ;
As lovely as the Bay of Naples
Yon placid cove amid the maples ;
And in my neighbor's field of corn
I recognize the Golden Horn.

Here Nature taught from year to year,
When only red men came to hear ;
Methinks 'twas in this school of art
Venice and Naples learned their part ;
But still their mistress, to my mind,
Her young disciples leaves behind.

In his poem of "Sympathy," which is the first in Mr. Emerson's little collection already referred to, there runs all through a subtile argument deliciously characteristic of the writer. It amounts to the fact that he had just lost a companion whom he had loved in the wrong way and did not rightly appreciate until his departure revealed him :

On every side he open was as day,
That you might see no lack of strength within,
For walls and ports do only serve alway
For a pretence to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Cæsar was victorious,
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame :
In other sense this youth was glorious,
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

* * * * *

He forayed like the subtle haze of summer,
 That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,
 And revolutions worked without a murmur,
 Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unaware by this,
 I quite forgot my homage to confess;
 Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,
 I might have loved him, had I loved him less.

* * * * *

Is't then too late the damage to repair?
 Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp has reft
 The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,
 But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,
 Though it be scented in the morning air,
 Still shall we be truest acquaintances,
 Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

This is hardly a contemporary strain. It is not the voice of a modern, but that of an Elizabethan poet; and so you can equally well say of a great many of the verses that he wrote. They would seem not inappropriate to put to the account of Herbert, Lovelace, or Sidney. You will certainly find few like them in the age of Tennyson. Of this particular poem, of which we have quoted less than half, Mr. Emerson says, it "reveals the tenderness under that triple steel of stoicism and the intellectual subtilty it could animate." He goes further, and remarks that "his classic poem on 'Smoke' suggests Simonides, but is better than any poem of Simonides." But he wrote two poems on Smoke,—though we suspect the briefer one, which follows, is the one intended by this encomium. It reads thus:

SMOKE.

Light-wingéd Smoke! Icarian bird,
 Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight;
 Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
 Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
 Or else departing dream, and shadowy form
 Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts,
 By night star-veiling, and by day
 Darkening the light and blotting out the sun:
 Go thou, my incense, upward from this hearth,
 And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

Thoreau's poem on "Smoke in Winter," which is his remaining effort on this general topic, would be considered by many the very best

poem he ever wrote ; and it has good claims to that distinction. It would have done Wordsworth no discredit if it had been written by him, and may properly take rank, both for loftiness of thought and carefulness of style, with the best that Wordsworth accomplished in the same field. I think Thoreau has written other poems that may be called evenly good, according to the most orthodox tests ; but in this, certainly, he forgot all perversity, and kept his art in mind at each step. Mark, for instance, such lines as these, not only for their descriptive but also for their poetic quality, and who has written better ?—

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,
The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,
And making slow acquaintance with the day.

* * * * *
In wreathéd loiterings dallying with itself.

* * * * *
It has gone down the glen with the light wind,
And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,
Draped the tree-tops, loitered upon the hill,
And warmed the pinions of the early bird,
And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,
Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,
And greets his master's eye at his low door,
As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.

This subject was, to some extent, a favorite with him ; and he devotes poems also to each of those related topics, "Haze" and "Mist." It may be that these aimless, light, upward bodies, which seem half spirit as well as body, and which stream between the world which is and the one we dream of, in some way pictured to him his own journey of life. He was alive always, and most, to a distant message, and kept an alert eye for the newest oracle and the nimblest messenger. He was enraptured especially by music. "It teaches us again and again," he says, "to trust the remotest and finest as the divinest instinct, and makes a dream our only real experience. . . . There are in it such strains as far surpass any man's faith in the loftiness of his destiny." And by other such telling comments he prefaces his

RUMORS FROM AN ÆOLIAN HARP.

There is a vale which none hath seen,
Where foot of man has never been,
Such as here lives with toil and strife,
An anxious and a sinful life.

There every virtue has its birth
Ere it descends upon the earth,

And thither every deed returns
Which in the generous bosom burns.

There love is warm, and youth is young,
And poetry is yet unsung ;
For Virtue still adventures there,
And freely breathes her native air.

And ever, if you hearken well,
You still may hear the vesper-bell,
And tread of high-souled men go by,
Their thoughts conversing with the sky.

The larger part of Thoreau's poems are to be found in his book of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers," which, on the whole, is his book of widest range. In his other volumes he is more committed and kept to special themes ; but in this he brings together the ends of the earth. It seems as responsive to Greek philosophy and the Vedic scriptures as it is devoted to the natural wonders of his journey. Like the family scrap-bag, it abounds in everything. Plato and Sophocles are as much attended to as are the casual bird and the familiar flower. Whoever is capable of reading it in the author's high spirit will consider it one of the half-dozen most charming books in the world. It is a "Robinson Crusoe" written large, and written for the mature and philosophic mind. You cannot take his poems inserted here from their appropriate setting without serious loss ; but those who remember them in their place know to what thought they became tributary on the first perusal.

In one of his speculations in this book he has a fine poem on the kind of estimation he coveted, which these stanzas will partially represent. He says in it,—

My love must be as free
As is the eagle's wing,
Hovering o'er land and sea
And everything.

I must not dim my eye
In thy saloon ;
I must not leave my sky
And nightly moon.

* * * *

I cannot leave my sky
For thy caprice.
True love would soar as high
As heaven is.

The eagle would not brook
 Her mate thus won,
 Who trained his eye to look
 Beneath the sun.

Thoreau's independence and dislike of merely beaten paths would have driven him naturally from obedience to metrical rules (in spite of his easy ability to master them), when license was required. And so he took a wild liberty often with his lines. They were short and rough and rambling, and startled the reader not more by their caprice of rhythm than by their use of words not usually considered possible to a poet. A good sample of his style where it puts itself on the level of doggerel is the poem on "The Old Marlborough Road" in his essay on "Walking." But he puts his brave thought in it. He considers a road as "the bare possibility of going somewhere," and ends his reflections with this characteristic bit of philosophy :

If with fancy unfurled
 You leave your abode,
 You may go round the world
 By the old Marlborough Road.

In one sense the verses seem like a childish drivel which any one might imitate rapidly and to order ; but, somehow, he made even this manner serve his thought. A feeble writer might well enough parody the structure mechanically : it would be quite another thing to inspire it with a really poetic conception and conclusion.

In his poems everywhere the note of sincerity lends its force and charm. The vigor of his expression is due to this. How strong these lines are in his poem of "Inspiration" !

But if with bended neck I grope,
 Listening behind me for my wit,
 * * * * *
 Making my soul accomplice there
 Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
 Then will the verse forever wear :
 Time cannot bend the line which God hath writ.

This poem, which was originally much longer than it now is, as it stands in the book of his "Letters," contains, farther on, expressions of the most lofty religious fervor, not easily matched by any contemporary muse. The lines in which they occur were often quoted and requoted by himself, and so I append them below :

I hearing get, who had but ears,
 And sight, who had but eyes before ;

I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life;
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'Tis peace's end, and war's beginning strife.

* * * * *

I will not doubt the love untold
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young, and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

His brief poem on "Prayer" is in much the same vein; and it successfully blends the self-reliance of an ancient Stoic with the trust of the Christian saint. It is the conjunction of Epictetus with Herbert or Fénelon:

Great God! I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Than that I may not disappoint myself;
That in my conduct I may soar as high
As I can now discern with this clear eye;
That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
And my life practise more than my tongue saith;
That my low conduct may not show,
Nor my relenting lines,
That I thy purpose did not know,
Or overrated thy designs.

Mr. Thoreau's nearest friends are accustomed to say that he had a more genial and sunny side than the casual caller or stranger was apt to discover, or than was sometimes reflected by his utterance. In his religious lines one may see that if he was stoical he was not wholly a stoic, and that he could feel and experience both trust and love.

Poetry was either Thoreau's diversion or his reliance when prose failed. He believed that, in the main, prose was the better medium; but he read the best poets largely, and selected from them with rare felicity. In the "Week" he gives us several pages of his own translations from Anacreon, an author who seemed, singularly enough, to be attractive to him. "Great prose, of equal elevation," he says, "commands our respect more than great verse, since it implies a more permanent and level height, a life more pervaded with the grandeur of the thought. The poet often only makes an irruption, like a Parthian, and is off again, shooting while he retreats; but the prose writer has conquered, like a Roman, and settled colonies." He preferred to live in deeds rather than in words, and said,—

My life has been the poem I would have writ,
But I could not both live and utter it.

Still, as Emerson says, "his biography is in his verses." You find his salient traits all brought together there. That sturdy self-assertion, his love of paradox, his defence of that truth which is anti-proverbial and not apparent, his vision of the all in each, his emphasis on the present tense and the place where he then stood in speaking, his almost Swedenborgian belief in the double meaning of things, the mystic and hidden being the one he held chiefly valuable,—all these are best focussed in his poetry, though easily enough seen in his essays and narratives.

Thoreau's poetry is not of the kind that will lift the reader by any lyric sweep of prodigious exaltation, but it appeals rather to the inner spirit, like the lines of Wordsworth and Emerson. It brings with it no drum and fife; it expresses, instead, the rapture and fervor and ecstasy of the still small voice. It carries with it the unconscious melody of the brook's ripple and the jocund spirit of the bird's song.

One of his poems, untitled when it first appeared, and afterwards called "The Fisher's Boy," gives almost an epitome of his own life. It is, in fact, picture, biography, and poem together :

My life is like a stroll upon the beach
As near the ocean's edge as I can go;
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

My sole employment 'tis and scrupulous care
To place my gain beyond the reach of tides,
Each smoother pebble and each shell more rare
Which Ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore;
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea;
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed o'er
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view;
Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew.

Joel Benton.

A BACHELOR'S BLUNDER.

CHAPTER XVII.

JACOB AS A HERO.

THE virtues and advantages of early rising have been extolled from time immemorial. The advocates of sitting up late have so little chance of being listened to that they seldom venture to assert themselves, and must take comfort from the thought that their habit is more imitated, if less admired, than the other. However, both practices have one advantage in common,—namely, that of increased elbow-room for him who adopts them, and a sense of self-approbation arising from the knowledge that he has all his wits about him, while so many of his fellow-mortals are horizontal, unconscious, and quite powerless for good or evil. It was probably for this reason that that young misanthrope Jacob Stiles was wont to take his walks abroad at an hour when the blinds at Farndon Court were still down and nobody was stirring, unless, it might be, the grooms taking the horses out to exercise.

Jacob slipped out noiselessly, as usual, on the morning after the return of the master of the house; and a very fine morning it was. An autumn sun, with little enough power in it, but luminosity enough to satisfy the soul of any rising artist, was sending slant rays across the drenched grass of the park; the mists were curling up from the lake, and the woods, in all the glory of varied color, suggested no thought of death or decay at that moment of general awakening. Jacob strolled along one of the gravelled paths which led through clumps of rhododendrons to the shrubbery, filled his lungs with the keen morning air, rejoiced in the fresh, moist smell of the earth, and thought to himself—as he sometimes did before the cares of the day came upon him—that this world, despite all that seems to prove the contrary, must really be a place in which man is meant to be happy.

If his back had not been turned to the house, he would have seen that another early riser had emerged from it and was following in his footsteps. Also, if he had possessed that power of thought-reading which has found so much favor with our half-sceptical, half-credulous generation, and which would be so excessively inconvenient if it were real, he might have discovered that that other person's reflections were pretty nearly identical with his own. Never yet had Hope known any troubles which a bright morning could not dissipate, at least for the time being.

It is probable that she had not retired in the best of spirits after her conversation with her sister-in-law on the previous evening ; but when one is twenty years of age and in perfect health, heaviness is apt to endure but for a night. Hope had now been two months married, and she had spoken nothing but the truth in saying that she had not felt bored during that time. If she and her husband were not precisely the lovers that Miss Herbert had hastily assumed them to be, they were at any rate excellent friends, and, as Hope had never expected more than that, she had every reason to be satisfied. Dick had been kindness itself. Certainly no lover could have been more anxious to surround her with luxuries and to make her journey enjoyable for her ; and now that she had been brought back to her new home, she found it all that she could have wished. When she had walked some little distance she turned and looked back at the house, with its steep roofs glistening in the sun, and had no fault to find with its architecture. It was not so grand a place as Helston Abbey, but it had a more habitable air, and seemed to smile in a friendly manner upon its young mistress. Hope improved the occasion by a few good resolutions. She was not going to be fretful and capricious again, as she knew that she had sometimes been during her engagement ; she was not going to waste any more time in wondering whether her lot was exactly that which she would have chosen if she had been free to choose ; above all things, she was not going to be exacting. What, under the circumstances, could be more absurd than that she should show herself exacting ? Of course Dick must be allowed to go away and stay away as often and as long as he pleased ; when he came home it would be her duty to make his home pleasant for him, that was all. It was true that that duty might be a little more easy to perform if his house had not happened to contain a sister of cynical proclivities ; but Hope was determined not to dwell upon drawbacks that fine, sunshiny morning : so she turned away again and resumed her walk towards the shrubbery.

Thus it was that Jacob, who was standing with folded arms, gazing absently at the view, became conscious of her approach. She did not see him ; and, obeying the impulse which was always his first impulse on catching sight of a fellow-creature, he concealed himself behind a belt of evergreens and waited. She passed quite close to him, walking slowly and swinging the sunshade which she carried in her hand, while he, peering between the branches, scanned her features with eager curiosity. His verdict upon her was that Miss Herbert had made use of a very inadequate expression in describing her as pretty. "I am not at all sure," he mused, "that she is not the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. She has a good face, too : I don't think she will want to

turn me adrift. Though, God knows, it would be no great misfortune to me to be turned out of Farndon!"

Then he became more analytical. Jacob's art-studies had been conducted in harmony with those canons for which Tristram could not find words to express his scorn, and he knew what the ideal human form ought to be. He measured Hope by this standard, and found that her defects were too trifling to deserve mention. After that he proceeded to somewhat subtler but not less confident conclusions. "There is an odd sort of expression in those gray eyes of hers: she seems to be looking for something that she hasn't found yet. She is not unhappy, but she is not happy either; and it would surprise me very much to hear that she was in love with her husband."

This shows that Jacob's powers of observation were of no mean order, and that, for all his disinclination to look his neighbors in the face, he must have studied them surreptitiously to some purpose. Indeed, if he had not done so he could hardly have been the very promising artist that he was.

Hope, meanwhile, pursued her leisurely way, happily unconscious that behind the bushes on her right hand there lurked a youth capable of drawing such startlingly rapid deductions from a mere glimpse of her face. On reaching the end of the shrubbery, she found herself at an iron gate, beyond which a footpath led across the park; and, as she had still plenty of time before her, she wandered down this until at length she came to the margin of the lake, where she found a punt moored. It is a peculiarity of punts, as distinguished from other boats, that nobody can look at them without instantly wishing to get into them and sit down. Hope experienced this desire, and, although the seats of the punt in question were still wet with the night dews, she gave effect to it. She had not been seated long when another ambition, almost equally natural and harmless, took possession of her. Some fifty yards away from her there was a small island, round the shores of which a bed of water-lilies had spread itself. The silver cups dotted over that expanse of flat green leaves were all the more tempting because they were out of reach, and, after Hope had contemplated them longingly for a few minutes, and had noticed that a long pole was lying at her feet, she could not resist unfastening the painter which attached the punt to its stake.

Now, everybody knows that water-lilies are not easy flowers to pluck; but everybody does not know—because there are comparatively so few people who have tried it—that it is even more difficult for a novice to manipulate a punt-pole. Hope pushed herself off from the bank quite successfully; but she soon discovered that to shape her

course for any given point was another matter. Also, the punt-pole had a disagreeable tendency to get under the bottom of the punt and drag her, head first, into the water after it. Rather than let it succeed in this malignant intention, she allowed it at last to slip out of her fingers altogether,—a thing she never would have done if she had realized what must be the inevitable result of such imprudence. To be drifting about in a flat-bottomed boat close to dry land, yet hopelessly removed from it, and to see the punt-pole which might be the salvation of you floating in a tantalizing manner just beyond your grasp, is a position trying alike to the patience and the dignity. Hope would gladly have paid five pounds to any one who would have rescued her from it; but as nobody to whom five pounds could be offered was in sight, and as she could not bring herself to the humiliating course of shrieking for assistance, there was nothing for her to do but to sit down and make the best of it. "I suppose they will begin to look for me when I don't turn up at breakfast," she reflected, "and then there will be a hue and cry. If it were only Dick, I shouldn't mind so much; but I feel sure that Carry knows how to use a punt-pole, and will be quite unable to understand what I dropped the thing into the water for. Perhaps, if I wait long enough, it will float back to me."

But it did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, it drifted in the opposite direction; and Hope was disconsolately wondering whether she would be drowned if she jumped overboard, when, to her great joy, she caught sight of a slim young man hastening across the slopes of the park with an evident intention of offering help. This was no other than Jacob Stiles, who from the wooded hill above had watched Hope's proceedings and had seen what had happened to her. When he reached the brink of the lake he paused for a moment in his irresolute way, and then, raising his hat, called out, "You have lost your punt-pole, haven't you? Shall I come and lend you a hand?"

"Oh, please do!" cried Hope, without stopping to ask herself how her request was to be complied with.

Jacob made no reply, but sat down and began to unlace his boots.

"What are you going to do?" asked Hope, anxiously. "Can't you go and get a boat?"

"The boat-house is half a mile away, and I don't know who has the key," answered Jacob, kicking off his boots. "Don't be alarmed: I can swim like a fish."

"Oh, but you mustn't!—you really mustn't!" remonstrated Hope. And then, under her breath, "What an extraordinary young man! Surely he can't be going to take all his clothes off!"

He was not so indiscreet. He only divested himself of his coat,

waistcoat, and hat, waded a short distance into the water, and then struck out. The punt-pole was soon captured and restored. "Now, do you think you can manage to shove yourself back?" he asked, rather breathlessly.

"Oh, yes, if you tell me what to do," answered Hope; "but hadn't I better try to drag you into the boat first?"

"I am all right, thank you," said Jacob: "I can swim back in less time than it would take me to scramble into the punt."

That seemed likely enough, and, not to keep him longer in the water than she could help, Hope said no more, but followed his instructions, and so was enabled in the course of a minute or two to set foot on shore again. Then she began to feel very sorry and very much ashamed, and expressed herself to that effect.

"Why did you not go and get the boat, as I told you?" she asked, reproachfully.

"Because it would have taken such a long time," answered Jacob, who was standing up to his knees in water and making the punt fast. "Was it those water-lilies that you wanted?"

"Yes: it was very stupid of me. I wish I had not happened to see them."

"I can easily get you some, if that is all," remarked Jacob, unfastening the knot which he had just tied.

"Indeed," exclaimed Hope, "you'll do no such thing! What are you thinking of? Your teeth are chattering as it is, and you look quite blue with cold. You must go home at once. I won't keep you even to say thank you; but I shall see you again soon, I hope. I am Mrs. Herbert. Perhaps you live somewhere near this?"

"I live here," Jacob replied, smiling. "My name is Stiles,—Jacob Stiles." He brought out the two last words with something of an effort, for it was always painful to him to pronounce that plebeian name of his. Moreover, he perceived that Mrs. Herbert had mistaken him for an equal, and to correct mistakes of that kind is what nobody ever enjoys. "Have you not heard of me?" he asked, seeing that she looked none the wiser.

Hope shook her head. The fact is that Dick had only once chanced to mention his *protégé* to her, and that was so long ago that the circumstance had escaped her memory. She was a good deal puzzled to account for the presence at Farndon of an inmate who had the appearance and voice of a gentleman, though his existence had apparently been thought too unimportant to be made known to her, and she would gladly have put a few more questions to him. However, even if he had been quite dry she might have hesitated to do that, and to cross-examine him in

his present dripping condition would have been tantamount to manslaughter. So she said, "You really must not stand here talking another minute, Mr. Stiles. Do go back to the house; and run the whole way, please."

"I should find it rather easier to walk, if you don't mind," answered Jacob, emboldened by the friendliness of her manner to adopt a somewhat more familiar tone than was customary with him.

"Well, as it is all up hill, and your clothes are so heavy with the water,—only mind you walk very fast, and pray don't lose any more time. We shall meet later in the day. That is, unless you think you had better go to bed."

"There will be no necessity for that," said Jacob.

He had now resumed his coat and boots, and was without excuse for lingering longer: so he did as he was told, and was soon out of sight.

Hope followed him at a less rapid pace. When she entered the breakfast-room she found Dick and Carry already seated and perusing their respective letters.

"I have made a good start," she remarked, as she took her place: "I have had an adventure already. Why did you never tell me anything about a Mr. Stiles, who says he lives here?"

"Probably because it never occurred to him that Stiles could be the hero of an adventure," observed Carry. "On second thoughts, though, there would be a certain appropriateness in it if he were; for he happens to be an adventurer."

"I don't know why you are always so down on poor Jake, Carry," said Dick. "He is no more an adventurer than I am; he is an artist,—and an uncommonly clever one too, for that matter. I thought I had spoken to you about him, Hope. How has he been distinguishing himself this morning?"

"By plunging into an ice-cold lake with his clothes on," answered Hope. And then she gave a brief account of the episode alluded to, whereat both her husband and Miss Herbert laughed, the former good-humoredly, the latter ironically.

"I condole with you," Carry said. "It was hard luck to have such a compliment paid to you by a romantic-looking youth, and then to discover that he was only a Jacob Stiles after all. If you confine yourself to adventures of that kind, you won't find Farndon very exciting, I am afraid."

"I dare say it will be exciting enough to satisfy me," answered Hope, rather dryly. She could not help thinking that Carry had every inclination to treat her to the excitement of a pitched battle; and that

seemed a little hard, considering how pacific her own dispositions were.

As soon as breakfast was over, Dick asked her whether she would like to go over the house with him,—a proposal to which she readily assented. She expressed herself much pleased with all that she saw; and, indeed, the bedrooms afforded little scope for criticism. On the first floor Dick put his head into a large and comfortably-furnished sitting-room, and, having ascertained that it was empty, threw open the door. "These are Carry's quarters," he explained. "Carry is a young woman of fortune, I ought to tell you. She has her own servants and her own horses, and all the rest of it. I suppose she would have her own house, too, only her uncles and aunts kicked up such a row when she talked about living alone. I hope you won't find her awfully in your way here."

He cast a rather appealing glance at his wife, who smiled back upon him reassuringly.

"Don't be afraid," she answered: "I mean to conduct myself properly."

And, as they perfectly understood one another, there was no need to dwell any longer upon a ticklish subject.

"Now," said Dick, leading the way down-stairs again, "I'll show you my den. I had it locked up while those furniture-people were rampaging about, so you won't find it as spick-and-span as the rest of the house; but, such as it is, it's what I'm accustomed to, and I didn't want it meddled with."

Spick-and-span it certainly was not; but, like every other room in Farndon Court, it was large, airy, and cheerful. An immense oak writing-table, facing the windows, was covered with a mass of newspapers, letters, bills, and other documents, tossed pell-mell upon it by its untidy owner; the walls exhibited every known variety of gun and rifle, besides numerous fishing-rods and a few magnificent heads of wapiti, ibex, antelope, and other big game. But it was not upon these things that Hope's eyes rested; for the moment that she passed through the door-way she caught sight of two easels, supporting two pictures, with every detail of which she had good reason to be familiar. It must be confessed that her first sensation on recognizing these works of art was one of keen disappointment; but the next instant she remembered that there was nothing to be disappointed about. A few months ago it might have been another affair; but now what could it signify?

"So you were my one and only patron?" she said, turning to her husband with a slight laugh. "I might have suspected as much."

"Well, yes," answered Dick, apologetically. "You see, I thought I should like to have something of yours, and——"

"And you thought you would like to give me a little false encouragement at the same time. Thank you: it was kind of you, Dick."

"Intentions were good," murmured Dick, who perhaps knew more of what was passing in his wife's mind than she supposed.

She turned away with a sigh. "All that belongs to the past," she said. "The grapes are sour now, and I don't want to be an artist any more. Tell me about the real artist,—Mr. Stiles. Does he live here always? And how comes he to be here at all?"

"Jake? Oh, there isn't much to tell about him. I took him up—adopted him, you may say—when he was a little chap, and he has made his way by his own exertions. They tell me he will be an R.A. one of these days. Would you like to see his studio? We shall find him at work, most likely."

"Unless he is in bed with symptoms of rheumatic fever coming on," remarked Hope. "The very least I can do is to inquire after him."

Jacob, however, was not in bed, and declared himself to be none the worse for the cold bath that he had taken. Hope noticed a change in his voice and a certain constraint in his manner, which made her fancy that he was not best pleased at being intruded upon; but that did not deter her from lingering awhile in the great bare studio which had been assigned to him at the top of the house. There was not very much to look at; for it was Jacob's system never to undertake more than one work at a time, and the canvas before which he was standing exhibited only a rough outline. Yet, rough though it was, it interested Hope, who recognized in it a dexterity such as she had never been able to attain to.

"I wish I could do that!" she sighed.

Jacob had none of the pride that apes humility. "It takes a long time to learn," he said; "but I think almost anybody who chooses to take the trouble can learn it."

"Ah," said Hope, rather sadly, "that is what I used to think; but I know better now."

And then a conversation began in which Dick felt that he was in no way qualified to take a part, so he said, "I think I'll just go round to the stables. You two can entertain each other for a bit, I dare say."

Jacob seemed to breathe more freely after he was gone. He had a good deal to say about painting, and said it with modesty and knowledge of his subject, and after a time he produced a portfolio of sketches with which Hope was greatly struck. His style was the opposite of

Tristram's, being chiefly remarkable for its exquisite finish ; but there was nothing small in his treatment of a subject, and his arrangement of color, light, and shade had the ease of a master of his craft.

"You ought to be very happy !" exclaimed Hope, rather enviously, when she came to the end of the collection. "Have you sent anything to the Academy yet?"

"Not yet: I thought it best to wait until I was pretty sure of success."

"But of course you will exhibit soon ; and then all of a sudden you will find yourself famous."

"Perhaps," said Jacob.

The listlessness of his tone surprised Hope, who looked up at him with inquiring eyes.

"Are you not ambitious?" she asked.

"I don't think I have much ambition," he answered. "I shall be satisfied if I can make enough to live upon."

"You are quite sure of being able to do that ; and, after all, that is a great deal. At least, I used to think so. Did Mr. Herbert tell you that I once intended to be an artist?"

"He said that you painted very well."

"But not well enough, unfortunately. I was more ambitious than you are: I wanted to excel. Still, like you, I should have been contented if I could have earned my bread by my brush."

Jacob looked a little puzzled. "'Earning your bread' is only a way of speaking with you, Mrs. Herbert ; to me it means more than you can understand, perhaps. I—I am living upon charity now."

He flushed slightly as he uttered the last words, and Hope, to relieve him, said, "That was just my own position. My father lost all his money at the time of his death, and it was quite necessary that I should do something to support myself. It is all over now, and I don't mind talking about it ; but it was a dreadful grief to me when I was told that I should never succeed."

"How could anybody know that?"

"I suppose there are not many people who could have known it, or who would have liked to say so if they had ; but it was a great artist who told me, and I am sure he was not mistaken. He knew how it would hurt me to hear the truth, and that made it all the more kind of him to speak honestly."

Jacob was standing with one foot upon a chair, his elbow resting on his knee and his hand supporting his chin. He looked down with curious, compassionate eyes at Hope, who was seated near him. "Was this long ago?" he asked.

"Oh, no; only a few months,—although it seems like years."

She did not know what a quick-witted observer she had to deal with; but in truth a far duller fellow than Jacob would have divined the history of Mrs. Herbert's engagement and marriage after that. She herself felt that she had been a little too communicative, and changed the subject.

Jacob was very willing to talk about art and pleased to be talked to; but she did not succeed in breaking down his reticence or in inducing him to give her any information about himself. She went away at last, feeling sorry for the poor young man, although she could have given no definite reason for her pity, and was horrified to find that she had taken up rather more than an hour of his valuable time. "What a nuisance I must have been to him!" she thought.

She would have been very much astonished had she been told that that hour of conversation had earned her a friend whose gratitude and devotion would cease only with his life. Just so a vagrant dog, acquainted with the rough usage of the streets and the kicks of the passers-by, will attach himself to some kind-hearted person who stoops unthinkingly to pat him on the head, and will never leave that kind-hearted person again. And this is one reason why kind-hearted persons and others—especially others—should beware of noticing stray dogs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOPE RECEIVES VISITORS.

IF Hope did not as yet feel any such attachment for Jacob Stiles as he felt for her, she was nevertheless greatly interested in him and anxious to hear a little more of his antecedents, because he seemed to require interpretation in more ways than one. Dick, when interrogated, was apt to become so hopelessly monosyllabic that she did not think it worth while to pursue him to the stables and attack him with questions; but, happening to find her sister-in-law in the drawing-room, she was able to glean a part of the information that she desired from that quarter.

"I look upon Jake Stiles," Miss Herbert said, "as a living example of the folly of heedless benevolence. For reasons best known to himself, my brother picked him up when he was a child, brought him into the house, and gave him what I suppose you might call the education

of a gentleman. The natural consequence is that he is now about as miserable a being as you will meet with anywhere. At all events, he looks so. He is neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring."

"He is an artist," said Hope.

"Is he? I can't pretend to your knowledge of such subjects; but, even if he is, I should imagine that it was not much consolation to him to be an artist when nature evidently meant him to be a groom, or possibly a huntsman. Personally I don't like Stiles; his manners are not engaging, and he always gives me the impression that he would be insolent if he dared; but, to do him justice, he is a fine rider, and, though he doesn't appear to have much pluck at ordinary times, he has plenty of it on horseback. I have a mare in the stables that I wanted to get rid of two years ago because she frightened me by the way she touched timber. Stiles asked to be allowed to take her in hand, and now I wouldn't part with her for any money. His system was to cram her at the biggest fence he could find and give her a rattling fall; and three or four lessons were enough for her. It was a rather more heroic remedy than most people would like to adopt, but it was completely successful."

"And you allowed him to risk his life in that way?" exclaimed Hope.

Carry laughed. "He did it to please himself, I presume: apparently he doesn't set much store by his life. As for me, I really didn't care whether I kept the mare or not, and I can't say that I cared very much whether Stiles broke his neck or not either. You must try not to be shocked by my brutal frankness of speech: it's a family failing."

Hope thought she would let that observation pass without comment. "But I don't yet understand," she said, "why Mr. Stiles should be miserable,—if he is miserable."

"You had better not call him *Mr.* Stiles: he is not accustomed to it. I don't think there can be much doubt about his being miserable; and the reason is what I told you. He won't do for the drawing-room, and he won't do for the servants' hall: so he has to live in a sort of no-man's-land and eat his dinner in his studio, which, when you come to think of it, must be dull work."

"Of course it must be; and it seems very cruel to deprive the poor young man of any kind of company. Why should he not dine with us?"

"I dare say he would like that very much; but, unfortunately, it is not practicable. Humble as I am, I can't say that I should enjoy being taken in to dinner by Jacob Stiles, and we certainly could not ask our friends to sit down beside him. It is all Dick's fault. He ought

to have handed him over to the stud-groom in the first instance, instead of sending him to an expensive school."

"But as he did not do that——" began Hope.

"As he did not do that, the hapless Stiles must get what comfort he can out of painting pictures, and occasionally being rolled upon by refractory mares, or plunging into ponds to rescue ladies who have managed to get adrift. It is bad luck for Stiles; but it can't be helped."

This sounded a little peremptory, considering that Miss Herbert was not the mistress of the house; and, in spite of her wise resolutions, Hope could not refrain from arguing the point. "My father always used to say that talent has the same privileges as birth," she remarked. "Besides, when a man has been brought up as a gentleman and behaves like one, that ought to be sufficient. I will ask Dick what he thinks about it."

Two vertical lines appeared on Miss Herbert's forehead, and it looked very much as if her teeth were set behind her rather thin lips; but she, too, had formed certain resolutions, and when she opened her mouth it was only to say, "I had been wondering what line you would take up with regard to Stiles. I warned him that you would very likely wish to turn him out, neck and crop; but he had the happy inspiration of rushing into the water after you, and now his position is assured. At the same time, I doubt whether Dick will be prepared to receive him as a member of the family."

And, considerably to Hope's surprise and mortification, it turned out that Dick was not so prepared. She took the first opportunity of speaking to him upon the subject, and he answered, without any hesitation, that it wouldn't do. "Jake used to dine with me when he was younger and before Carry came to live here," he said; "but that was another affair altogether. Things are best as they are for the present, and, if he goes on as he has begun, he will have a home of his own before very long."

"I think," said Hope, "that he has been rather unfairly treated."

"Do you? Well, perhaps he has in some ways; and yet I hardly see what else could have been done. Anyhow, it wouldn't be either for his comfort or for ours to make a change at this time of day."

"It might help the conversation out a little," said Hope; for up to now her husband had gratified all her wishes, when he had not anticipated them, and it was grievous to think of Carry's triumph.

Dick rubbed his ear and looked contrite. "This sort of thing must be awfully slow work for you, of course," he said. "We must get some people down here to amuse you. Couldn't you ask a lot of your friends?"

"I could, no doubt, if I possessed a lot of friends," answered Hope; "but, as I have none, I must submit to the slowness." After this disagreeable speech her conscience smote her, and she added, humbly, "I am sorry I spoke so crossly, Dick: I don't really find it slow here at all."

"My dear girl," answered Dick, good-humoredly, "you weren't a bit cross; and as for your finding it slow, you must,—you can't help it. I know that if I were in your place I should perfectly detest being shut up in a country house with—with——"

"With whom?" inquired Hope.

"I was going to say with nothing particular to do. I'll get Francis and one or two other fellows to come down and shoot next week. They will be better than nobody."

Hope turned away, without replying. The matter-of-course and perfectly philosophical way in which Dick took it for granted that his society would not be acceptable to her vexed her and made her angry with him. She and he were not lovers, it was true, but they were friends,—at least, that was what he had averred when he proposed to her,—and friends ought surely to be able to live together without feeling the need of constant excitement. "It is one word for me and two for himself," she thought, rather ungratefully. In truth, to ask a party of men down to shoot seemed rather a roundabout way of providing her with a change of company.

Possibly this aspect of the case may have presented itself also to Dick; for when, before the post went out, he requested Hope to write the necessary invitations, these proved to be for the most part addressed to ladies whose husbands were shooting-men, and who were begged to put up with a few quiet days at Farndon for their husbands' sake. With most of these ladies Hope was already more or less acquainted, and she neither liked nor disliked any of them. Mr. Francis she did rather dislike, yet was prepared to extend to him the welcome due to Dick's most intimate friend.

Everybody accepted, and everybody came. It seemed not unlikely that the alacrity of these good people was stimulated by a desire to see and criticise the bride, and it is certain that, when they assembled, the eyes of all of them were fixed upon her with a curiosity of which she was fully conscious. This she did not object to, thinking it natural enough, if a trifle embarrassing; and it ceased to be perceptible after the first evening. But she could not help resenting the closeness with which Mr. Francis watched her throughout his stay, because she felt sure that he was busily taking notes the whole time of the many particulars in which she failed to come up to his notion of what Dick Herbert's

wife ought to be. Also, she fancied that he communicated his impressions to Carry, with whom he appeared to be upon exceedingly friendly terms.

On the evening before his departure she committed the indiscretion of asking him whether he remembered a certain conversation which she had had with him a few months before in Eaton Square.

He made gestures to simulate the rending of his clothes and the heaping of ashes on his head. "Mrs. Herbert," he said, "the memory of that dreadful conversation will remain with me to my dying day. I would ask you to forgive me, only I know that that would be useless."

"I will forgive you," said Hope, "if you will withdraw what you said on that occasion."

Francis made a grimace. "The condition is a hard one to swallow," he remarked. "I don't think recantations are much good, as a general rule. Galileo recanted, and was sent to prison all the same; Cranmer recanted, and had to recant his recantation at the stake. You see, the worst of it is that I meant what I said. Only you might bear in mind that I didn't mean it to apply to you."

"But you think that it applies to me," persisted Hope.

"My dear Mrs. Herbert, is it quite fair to impute thoughts to me which I have never expressed? But I will continue to be honest and tell you the simple truth, though I shall probably make you hate me worse than ever. I don't know what to think: I am puzzled."

"Is not that, perhaps, because you are so very clever? People who are always trying to find out what lies beneath the surface must often be puzzled, I suppose; for it does occasionally happen that there is nothing to discover."

"Didn't I tell you that I should make you hate me worse than ever? It can do me no harm now, and it may do you some good, if I assure you that every word I said about Dick that night was gospel truth."

"I have no doubt you believe it to be so, and I quite recollect all that you said. Dick's wife was to make herself his shadow, otherwise all sorts of terrible things would happen; wasn't that it? But—do you know?—I fancy that Dick is quite contented with the one shadow which he already possesses. He has never yet asked me to share a single one of his pursuits; but, profiting by your kind advice, I have offered my company once or twice, and his polite resignation has been beautiful to witness. This emboldens me to think that perhaps, after all, I may understand my husband almost as well as you do."

A gleam of sudden and intense amusement swept across Mr. Francis's face. He was thinking to himself, "As I live, the woman's

jealous ! and Herbert is a deep diplomatist, without knowing it !" But he said aloud, with suitable gravity, "Don't be weary in well-doing, Mrs. Herbert : in due season you will reap if you faint not."

And with that he turned on his heel, leaving Hope very angry.

Whatever may have been Mr. Francis's opinion of his friend's wife, Hope's other guests carried away with them the memory of a pleasant and gracious hostess. She exerted herself to make their stay agreeable, she found them easy enough to entertain, and she was heartily glad when they all took themselves off. But what was far more delightful than this was Carry's announcement that she intended to give herself an indefinite leave of absence. She had a round of visits to pay, she said, and really could not tell how long they might last. She might be back in a week or two, or she might be away for a couple of months. "I go and return as the fancy takes me," she explained. To which Hope could only reply that that was the true way to enjoy life, and inwardly trust that her sister-in-law might long remain free from the fancy to return.

Whether Dick's sentiments were identical with her own she could not tell for certain, because he was so silent and never spoke evil of the absent ; but there were signs that increased freedom was not unwelcome to him. Had that freedom been just a little less absolute, Hope would have been better pleased. She was obliged to admit this to herself, though somewhat ashamed of the admission. She was sure that the servants must think it odd that her husband should be away from morning to night, shooting, attending magistrates' meetings, and what not. After all, he was her husband, and it would have been natural for him to offer to ride or drive with her occasionally. But he did not seem to think so ; and certainly, when they met, he was as kind and friendly as it was possible to be. Nor did she find her life dull. She was accustomed to being left to her own devices, and she had occupations enough in receiving the neighbors, whose name was legion, in returning their calls, in driving the cobs which Dick had bought for her through the glades of Windsor Park and Forest, and in discussing art with Jacob Stiles, whom she saw every day.

Nevertheless, a vague sense of disappointment was ever present with her. During her engagement she had been nervous and sometimes almost terrified, feeling that she was about to take a plunge in the dark and that lifelong misery or remorse might be awaiting her. But it was nothing of that kind that she experienced. She was not at all miserable ; marriage had brought her all that she had expected in her most sanguine moments, and more,—immunity from care and control, an amiable and most unobtrusive husband, and every luxury procurable by

money. If she wanted something in addition to all this, what in the world could it be that she wanted?

She was putting the above question to herself late one afternoon as she walked across the park towards the house, and she had not succeeded in finding an answer to it, when she caught sight of a horseman proceeding leisurely, with a loose rein, up the avenue. "Another native, I suppose," she thought. "Shall I see him, or shall I not? I think I won't."

But it was too late to make any choice as to that; for the supposed native had seen her already, had turned his horse off the road, and was now cantering across the grass towards her. As he drew nearer, he raised his hat; and then Hope recognized him.

"Captain Cunningham!" she exclaimed. "What can have brought you down into the depths of the country?"

"How do you do, Mrs. Herbert?" said the young man, dismounting, and passing his arm through his horse's bridle. "This isn't the depths of the country at all; it's within an easy ride of Windsor, where I have the misfortune—the good luck, I mean—to be quartered just now."

He looked handsomer than ever in the dark-colored suit and Newmarket boots, which, it is needless to say, fitted him to the utmost degree of perfection, and he appeared to be in the enjoyment of excellent health and spirits. "I thought," continued he, "that, as I was within hail of you, you wouldn't mind my looking you up."

"I should have been deeply offended if you had not," answered Hope.

She was unaffectedly glad to see the young fellow again, and had almost forgotten the constraint which had interfered with the pleasure of their last meeting. That, and the cause of it, were connected with the remote past; in Bertie Cunningham she saw only a friend of former days, whose unexpected vicinity might help to enliven present ones. "Come into the house," she said, "and I will give you a cup of tea."

"Is Miss Herbert here?" Cunningham inquired.

"No: she has gone away to stay with some of her friends."

"Oh! Anybody else staying with you?"

"Not a soul, I regret to say. You will have to put up with me for half an hour, if you will consent to remain so long. Dick is not likely to be in before dinner-time."

"That's all right!" cried the young man, in a tone of hearty satisfaction. "Then we can have a comfortable talk by ourselves, and you can tell me all your news."

"Only I haven't any to tell. You had better favor me with yours."

"I haven't any either ; but never mind, we'll talk about something that isn't news. That will give us a rather longer list of subjects, won't it?"

CHAPTER XIX.

HOPE SPOILS SPORT.

KING DAVID, it will be remembered, put off his sackcloth, washed his face, and began to eat and drink as usual, the moment he heard that his child was dead,—thereby astonishing his friends, who surely might have known better than to be astonished at so simple and human a manner of meeting the inevitable. For what some people call resignation to the Divine will, and others merely recuperative force, is essential to our existence, and it is certain that there would be no getting on without it in this world of loss and disappointment. Bertie Cunningham was as little conscious of being a philosopher as the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* was of talking prose ; but this did not prevent him from regulating his life in accordance with strictly philosophical principles, of which the first and foremost was never to fret himself over what could not be helped. As soon, therefore, as Hope Lefroy had become the wife of another man he sought consolation and change of ideas, with so much success that, before the pheasant-shooting began, he was able to report himself to Mrs. Pierpoint by letter as completely cured. Now, if he had not been completely cured it would have been imprudent, not to say wrong, of him to call at Farndon Court ; but, as it was, what harm could there be in his renewing acquaintance with a lady to whom he had never declared his love and who might now at least be his friend ?

He found her a little altered,—whether for the better or not it was too early to determine ; but certainly she was no longer exactly what she had been before her marriage. She was more matronly, more dignified, perhaps a trifle graver ; but there was nothing either in her face or in her speech to indicate that she repented of the step which she had taken. As for her beauty, that seemed rather to have increased than diminished, he thought, as he watched her drinking her tea by the fire-light. In one respect, at any rate, she was unchanged : she had not yet picked up the society slang with which Bertie's ears were familiar ; she knew nothing of the absorbing topics which he was accustomed to hear discussed over the rims of teacups ; and so their conversation was chiefly about local matters. Bertie had been quartered at Windsor before, and knew the neighborhood well. He stated that it was not so bad, if you

didn't expect too much of it. There were the queen's hounds, and there was a fair amount of shooting, and every now and then somebody gave a ball.

"Do you mind driving ever so many miles for a dance, Mrs. Herbert?" he asked. "Shall you go in for these entertainments? I will if you will."

"That is a powerful inducement," answered Hope. "I dare say I shall go to some of them, if Dick will take me. But I am afraid balls are a great bore to him."

"He might be left at home," observed Bertie. "That is, I suppose he might. What do you do with yourself all day here? Write letters, and feed the chickens, and go out for a drive in the afternoon? Or do you still keep up your painting?"

"You have hit off my manner of life exactly," Hope replied. "No; I haven't begun to paint again yet. I am rather discouraged by the presence of an artist in the house. Did you ever hear of a Mr. Jacob Stiles who was adopted and educated by Dick, and who lives here?"

Captain Cunningham couldn't say that he ever had.

"I will introduce you to him some day," said Hope. And then she related the circumstances under which her own introduction to Jacob had been effected.

"The luck that some people have!" ejaculated Bertie. "Why wasn't I on the spot to cast myself into the water, instead of the chap with the aristocratic name?"

"You would have spoiled your clothes, and I know that would have been a grief to you; whereas the chap with the aristocratic name never gave a thought to his."

"What an unkind thing to say!—and so utterly false, too! Do you often favor your husband with speeches of that sort?"

"My husband has a soul far above clothes, and I never say disagreeable things to him, because he never boasts of the wonders that he would have performed if he had only had the opportunity. Used he not to be rather a friend of yours? I wish you would stay and dine, and then you would see him."

But Cunningham shook his head. "I wish I could; but, you see, I shouldn't be able to dress. Now, you needn't laugh: no civilized being enjoys sitting down to dinner in a shooting-coat. I should like to meet Herbert all the same. He might give a fellow a day's shooting."

"I have no doubt that he would, if he knew that a fellow was within reach. I won't fail to let him know."

Thus they went on talking innocent sort of nonsense and finding each other very pleasant company. At that time there was no thought of any such thing as love-making in the mind of either of them; they were both young, and there was between them that freemasonry which, alas! cannot coexist with disparity of years. "Crabbed age and youth cannot live together." It may be that a mutual understanding is somewhat difficult of attainment even between middle age and youth,—between a man in the prime of life, like Dick Herbert, and such a young couple as were now warming themselves beside Dick Herbert's hearth. At any rate, both Hope and Bertie Cunningham stopped talking nonsense when the master of the house strode into the room in gaiters and shooting-boots, having just returned from a long day's sport in the coverts of a neighbor.

Not that there was anything chilling in Dick's reception of his visitor. He shook hands with the young guardsman, said he was glad to see him (which thing he assuredly would not have said unless it had been true), and repeated with so much cordiality the invitation already given by his wife that Bertie allowed his scruples to be overruled and consented to stay to dinner.

Nevertheless, both during that repast and after it was over there was a certain feeling of restraint in the air. Three is proverbially an awkward number; moreover, Dick was not particularly fond of Bertie Cunningham, whom he looked upon as a rather poor specimen of the modern British warrior, and it was altogether beyond his power to conceal his likes and dislikes, although on this occasion he took more trouble to do so than usual. He did not omit to ask the young man to come over and shoot on a specified day, and showed perhaps an even greater consideration for his comfort by leaving the drawing-room almost as soon as they had re-entered it and only showing himself again just in time to say good-night.

Hope was leaning against the mantel-piece and looking down at the fire, with a smile upon her face, when her husband came back after seeing his guest ride away.

"Isn't he nice?" she said.

"He is a very good fellow," answered Dick.

As this was what Dick said about every man in whom he could find nothing special to commend, the compliment was not a very high one; but, such as it was, Hope did not cavil at it.

"I liked him much better to-day than I ever did before," she went on. "He is such a cheery, pleasant boy."

"Well," said Dick, "he isn't exactly a boy, you know. He wasn't born yesterday, in spite of his smooth face."

"Oh, but he is quite young in all his ways and ideas."

Dick, happening to hold a different opinion, did not give utterance to it, but said, "He will help us keep alive, I dare say. I am glad he is within reach, as you like him."

Hope was glad too; but she would have been a little less glad if she could have foreseen one consequence of the removal of Captain Cunningham's battalion from London to Windsor. She did not, however, trace any connection between cause and effect when she heard that Carry Herbert had abandoned the greater part of her intended visits and proposed to return to Farndon forthwith; only she felt a little annoyed that the sole intimation of this change of plans should have reached her through the servants. That Carry should make herself at home was all very well; but surely a few lines might have been addressed to the nominal mistress of the house.

Nothing is more irritating than a flea-bite. You must not complain of such things; you must not even (if you are in polite society) relieve your sufferings in the natural way; and that makes it extremely hard to bear. Hope received her sister-in-law with the utmost amiability; she was determined not to show that she was in the least vexed by the latter's lack of ceremony; but she was unable to forget it, and, what was worse, she strongly suspected that it had not been accidental.

And indeed it was not long before Carry chose to take what anybody must have considered a liberty. Captain Cunningham's second visit to Farndon was paid a few days after her return, and as soon as he was shown into the room where the two ladies were sitting she monopolized him in a manner which Hope did not altogether like, and which he himself evidently did not like at all. She seated herself close to him, she talked in a low voice, she made allusions quite unintelligible to a third person, and, in short, behaved in such a fashion that the third person began to wonder whether she had not better quit the scene. But this, though not in the best taste, was pardonable. What went very near to exhausting Hope's patience was to hear Carry coolly saying to their visitor, "Why don't you come over and stay a few days with us? You can get leave, I suppose. Come next week: the hounds are to meet close to us on Wednesday, and, if you haven't anything to ride, I'll put you up on one of mine."

It was a fortunate thing that Hope could not at the moment think of any method of administering the snub which this speech undoubtedly deserved; for it was not prudence that kept her silent. Bertie Cunningham undertook her revenge.

"Don't you think," he said, mildly, "that it might be as well to wait until I am asked?"

"Am I not asking you?" returned Carry, laughing. But she winced all the same, and Hope recovered her temper.

"Please come, if you can manage it, Captain Cunningham," said she. "You know how glad we shall be to see you."

An invitation given under such obvious pressure of circumstances could not be accepted without a little decent hesitancy; but Bertie did not protest to any wearisome length, because experience had taught him to believe that he was always welcome everywhere. Besides, he thought he would greatly enjoy a few days at Farndon Court,—which was even more to the purpose. To deny himself enjoyment, or the prospect of it, was what he had never done in all his life, and he had no notion of embarking upon a career of self-sacrifice now, although his eyes were sharp enough to discern breakers ahead. He could not devote his attention exclusively to Miss Herbert throughout his stay, or where would the enjoyment be? Yet he knew full well that, if he devoted his attention to anybody else, trouble would only too probably come of it. With as much physical courage as any ordinary person can require, he was sadly deficient in the moral variety of that attribute; and although he no longer (except every now and then, in a moment of despondency) thought of marrying Miss Herbert, he was mortally afraid of angering her. The state of her feelings was hardly a secret to him; of her liability to fits of unreasonable jealousy he had more than once had painful and convincing proof; finally, he perceived that she was not prepossessed in her sister-in-law's favor.

These considerations made him heartily wish that Carry would go away again, but did not deter him from reappearing at Farndon on the following Tuesday in a dog-cart, with his portmanteau between his feet, a bright smile upon his lips, and his heart filled with trust in Providence.

"Are you coming out hunting to-morrow?" he asked Hope in the course of the evening, having craftily entreated Miss Herbert to "play something," and shown his gratitude for her compliance by at once turning his back upon her and escaping to the other end of the room.

"I don't know," answered Hope, hesitating between doubt of her capacity and a natural disinclination to be left behind. "I should be very much in the way, I'm afraid. My father used to take me out in old days; but I can't say that I have ever really hunted. And these hounds go at a terrific pace, don't they?"

"Oh, sometimes; but what does that matter, so long as you are decently mounted? I'll look after you," added Bertie, reassuringly.

"Indeed you'll do nothing of the sort: you must look after Carry."

"Look after Miss Herbert! It's lucky she is making such a row with the piano that she can't hear you. If she hasn't learnt how to take care of herself by this time, she never will learn."

"If I go, I shall take care of myself too," observed Hope. She raised her voice slightly, and said, "Dick, do you think I might hunt with you to-morrow?"

Dick looked up from the evening paper with a rather dubious countenance, but he answered, "Oh, certainly, if you wish. I would have suggested it, only I didn't think you cared about coming. You shall ride the Parson. He won't bring you to grief, if you leave him alone: you'll have nothing to bother yourself about, except sticking on his back."

"I think I can manage that much," said Hope, the least bit nettled by the implied want of confidence in her seat. "Only please let it be understood that I am to be left alone quite as much as the Parson. I don't want to spoil anybody's sport."

"That is of course," answered Dick, smiling: "it is a fundamental maxim with hunting-ladies that they are to be treated for the time being as men. Isn't that so, Carry?"

Miss Herbert, who had hurried through the conclusion of a brilliant fantasia, and was not best pleased with the inattention of her audience, replied, "Women who don't know what they are about have no business in the hunting-field. Are you a novice?" she asked, turning abruptly to Hope.

"I must confess that I am," Hope answered; "but everything must have a beginning. I suppose there was a time when even you did not know a great deal about hunting."

"I suppose so," Miss Herbert responded, dryly; "but, if there was, I don't remember it. I cannot have been much more than six years old when I was in the condition of ignorance that you describe."

"No wonder you have forgotten it, then!" ejaculated Bertie.

He knew he ought not to say this, but he couldn't stop himself; and Miss Herbert's dark eyes, flashing angry notes of interrogation, rested upon a countenance of such childlike simplicity that she persuaded herself—not by any means for the first time in her experience of Bertie Cunningham—that he had wounded her unintentionally.

Now, after the foregoing fragment of dialogue, every one must perceive that it was a matter of pure necessity for Hope to ride straight to hounds on the following morning, even though she should risk her neck in the attempt; and this she was steadfastly resolved to do. When she was shown her mount—a rather small but powerful black horse, with whose shape it would have been difficult to find any fault,

and whose mild brown eyes gave evidence of a tractable disposition—she saw that the best had been done for her that could be done; and before she had ridden him a couple of hundred yards she felt her confidence rising, together with that spirit of emulation without which very few things worth speaking of would have been accomplished in the history of the human race. Dick, mounted on a gigantic flea-bitten gray, who was very fresh and too free with his heels to be a pleasant neighbor, appeared to have the prospect of some fine, healthy exercise before him; Carry's chestnut, though taking to the eye, looked as if he would require a good deal of riding; while to Bertie Cunningham had been awarded another chestnut, equally handsome, which had been acquired by Miss Herbert at a moderate figure, in consideration of the abominable temper which he had often displayed. "I hate a quiet horse," she was wont to say, just as certain yachtsmen will declare that they love rough seas. However, one seldom hears that preference expressed by sailors.

"You have got the pick of the bunch, Mrs. Herbert," remarked Bertie, after the brute that he was riding had nearly bucked him out of the saddle; and Hope was quite of the same opinion.

The meet was so near that it had not been thought worth while to send the horses on; and as our party had been a little late in starting they had but a short time to wait after their appearance upon the scene. The scene itself rather took Hope's breath away. Never in her previous small experience of hunting had she seen anything like so vast a concourse, and while Dick was introducing her to some of his acquaintances she was inwardly wondering how in the world all those horsemen and horsewomen would contrive to get away. "It will be worse than dancing in a London ball-room," she thought.

But somehow or other—Hope could not have said how—they did get away; and, having no notion what line to take, she presently found herself one of a crowd which was galloping down a narrow lane, headed by Dick. To follow Dick seemed to be quite the wisest course. No doubt he knew what he was about, and, as he was not piloting her, it could not be on her account that he had stuck to the road, instead of flying over a hedge and disappearing, as Carry and Bertie, together with a considerable number of others, had done. Dick did not stick to the road long. Suddenly Hope saw him wheel to the right, through what appeared to be an open gate, with the whole division after him, helter-skelter, and then came a stretch of grass and a little more elbow-room. This was very delightful. The Parson was going with long, easy strides; the hounds were visible on a hill-side not so far ahead, and it was only when Hope noticed a slackening in Dick's pace that she saw

what she might have seen a little sooner, in the shape of a fence of truly appalling dimensions between the hounds and her.

"Good gracious!" she muttered, under her breath. "Surely he isn't going to jump that! If he does we must,—that is certain." And she hardly knew whether to be relieved or disappointed when it became evident that he was not going to jump it.

He held up his hand, calling out, "Hold hard! there's a gate," and then she saw the field making tumultuously for a point some little distance to her right. But the gate proved obdurate. There was no unfastening it, and many precious minutes were wasted before it could be lifted off its hinges. Through such a throng of horsemen, each (with one noble exception) bent upon forwarding his own interests at the expense of those of his neighbors, it was no easy matter for a lady to force a passage, and Hope did not attempt it, but allowed the crowd to pass her, trusting to make up for lost time later on. This was too much even for the equable temper of the Parson, who began to fidget and snatch at his bit, while Dick's gray plunged, reared, and ended by becoming very nearly unmanageable.

"Stay where you are," shouted his rider, as he turned and galloped back out of the press: "I'll wait for you on the other side." (He *was* piloting her, then.) And thereupon he charged the fence and cleared it like a bird.

Many a sad catastrophe has been brought about through lack of that unquestioning obedience to instructions which has gone clean out of fashion in these days, when everybody knows as much as everybody else, if not more. With the spirit of the age strong upon her, Hope said to herself that what one horse had done another could do,—an assumption of which the inconsequence had to be, and speedily was, brought home to her. It may be that a more experienced rider would have taken the Parson safely over that fence; and, as a matter of fact, he did get over, or rather through it; but it was only to land on his head and deliver Hope with considerable violence on hers. After a few seconds of bewilderment, she realized that she had had a fall, and, raising her eyes, became aware of Dick, who, from the back of his plunging gray, called out,—rather unsympathizingly as she thought,—*"Get up!"*

She staggered to her feet, and he said, "Now walk on a bit."

This order also she contrived to obey, all self-assertion having been knocked out of her, and, after she had taken a few steps, Dick remarked, quietly, "You're all right, I see: I thought you might have had a slight concussion of the brain. Drink some of this," he added, tossing his flask to her, "and sit down on that bank till I come back. I must

try and find somebody to hold this brute for me: the Parson won't run away."

Hope, feeling a little faint and dizzy, did as she was told, and a few mouthfuls of sherry revived her. The Parson, who had scrambled on to his legs immediately after his fall and was placidly surveying her from a short distance, with his neck stretched out and his ears cocked, responded to her invitation to draw nearer, and allowed her to stroke his nose. The expression of his countenance seemed to imply that he sincerely regretted the disaster, but could not feel that he had been altogether responsible for it. While Hope was anxiously examining his fore-legs, Dick returned on foot, having left his horse in charge of a laborer, and asked, "How are you now? Better?"

"I am not a bit the worse, thank you," answered Hope; "only dreadfully ashamed. I suppose I behaved like a perfect idiot, didn't I?"

"You behaved very pluckily," answered Dick, smiling; "but it was asking a little too much of the old horse. I ought to have warned you that he isn't quite what he once was."

"Oh, it wasn't his fault," said Hope, despondently; "I feel sure that I was the one to blame: though what I did or left undone I have no idea. Is he hurt, do you think?"

"Not he! he thinks nothing of a little spill like that: do you, old boy? You gave me a rare fright, though, I can tell you. However, all's well that ends well."

"But it hasn't ended well at all!" exclaimed Hope, with tears in her eyes. "I have spoiled your run, though you promised to leave me to myself. Won't you go on now, and let me find my own way home?"

"I don't remember making any promises; and, if I did, it's lucky I broke them, for you couldn't very well have remounted without help. As for the hounds, they are miles away by this time: so, if you feel fit to ride now, we'll jog quietly home together."

"I suppose there is nothing else for it," said Hope, with a sigh. "One thing is certain, that you won't be victimized in this way a second time; for I am never going to hunt again."

"Why? Because you have had a cropper?"

"No; but I agree with Carry: the hunting-field isn't the proper place for a woman who can't take care of herself."

"Shall I let you into a secret?" whispered Dick. "You mustn't tell anybody I said so, because it's a perfectly outrageous opinion to hold; but, strictly between ourselves, I don't think the hunting-field is the proper place for a woman at all."

CHAPTER XX.

BERTIE IS LECTURED.

As Hope rode dejectedly homeward by her husband's side, she felt that she ought to make him some apology for having deprived him of a day's amusement; but then she recollected the callousness that he had displayed while she was lying prone at his feet, and it struck her that if there was to be any apologizing it might as well come from him as from her in the first instance.

So she began: "You said just now that I had given you a fright."

"So you did," answered Dick, struggling to get a cigar lighted, in spite of the curvetings of his gallant gray.

"You did not *look* much frightened," observed Hope, reproachfully.

"It wouldn't have done you any good if I had had a fit of hysterics, would it?"

"No; but it would have been decent to turn pale and gasp, instead of shouting, 'Get up!' at me, as if I had been a horse or a dog."

Dick laughed. "When people come to grief you should always make them stand up, if they can," he said. "Then you find out whether there is anything really amiss with them."

"Well," sighed Hope, "I suppose I ought to be thankful that I have escaped with nothing worse than a crushed hat and a muddy face; but it is very humiliating. I think I shall go to bed as soon as I get home. Never shall I have the courage to sit down to dinner with Carry after this! I can see her face of contempt already."

Dick edged a little nearer to his wife and bent forward, by which means he was able to discern tears upon her eyelashes. "My dearest girl," he said, kindly, "is it worth while to vex yourself about what a spiteful woman may say or do?"

Now, this was a really remarkable speech; for, in the first place, Dick seldom made use of any endearing epithet in addressing his wife, and, in the second, it was altogether unlike him to speak a word against an absent person. At the risk of lowering Hope in the reader's esteem, it must be confessed that the latter half of his sentence pleased her even more than the former.

"You do think her spiteful, then?" she said, glancing eagerly at him.

"Why, of course I do. I don't mind saying so, for once, since we are alone; but, if it's the same to you, we won't say so oftener than we can help in future. It's always a mistake to look on the dark side of things or people; and, after all, poor Carry has her good points."

"I don't doubt it; but what are they? I only ask for the sake of information."

"Well, she is straightforward, I think, and she is a good friend."

"And a bitter enemy. It is no use, Dick; I have tried to like her, but she has evidently made up her mind never to be a friend of mine, and I confidently expect the day to come when she will be straightforward enough to tell me so."

"I trust she won't have such bad manners; but there's no denying that her manners are not always up to the mark. You see, she is my sister: I can't very well turn her out of house and home."

"Of course you can't! How could you suppose that I meant to suggest such a thing?"

"I didn't suppose so: I was only wishing that it could be done. However," continued Dick, more cheerfully, "there's a chance of her going of her own free will, I fancy. Did it ever occur to you that there was anything between her and Cunningham?"

"Never! I can't imagine two people less suited to each other," answered Hope, with a vehemence which rather surprised her questioner.

"I shouldn't have said that," he remarked, musingly. "She is a year or two older than Cunningham, it is true, but they have always seemed to me to pull uncommonly well together. And then, you know, she is very comfortably off."

"Oh, I see: you set Captain Cunningham down as a fortune-hunter."

"We needn't call him names," said Dick. "When a man is hard up, he naturally prefers a rich wife to a penniless one."

"Even if she is years older than himself and spiteful into the bargain?" asked Hope. But as soon as she had said this her conscience rebuked her, and she exclaimed, "How ill-natured I am!—quite as bad as she is! Why do you let me speak like that about your sister?"

"I don't mind," answered Dick, with his quiet, good-humored smile.

"Do you mind anything, I wonder?" cried Hope, half laughing, half provoked. "Would you mind if I set the house on fire?"

"I'd rather you didn't," Dick confessed. He added, after riding on in silence for some minutes, "I know I'm a phlegmatic sort of fellow. The fact is, I am constitutionally lazy; things don't often worry me, and when they do I mostly hold my tongue about them. But I'll tell you what would worry me a great deal, and that would be to think that you were not happy at Farndon. Carry is a painful necessity for the present; there is nothing for it but to bear with her. Candidly speaking, Cunningham isn't exactly the husband I should have chosen for

her; but if she likes him, and if they choose to marry, I shall be very glad,—principally on your account.”

“Thank you,” said Hope, briefly.

Dick scrutinized her for a moment, and then said, “I wish, though, that you would tell me whether there is anything else that I can do to make life pleasanter for you. For instance, would you like me to go away for a week or two?”

The proposition was made in such evident good faith that Hope burst out laughing. “No,” she answered; “great as the relief of that would be, I shouldn’t feel justified in asking for it just yet. Carry has already been kind enough to warn me that you would probably absent yourself very often; but she has not the humble opinion of you that you have of yourself. I believe she actually imagined that I should miss you.”

To this Dick made no rejoinder; nor did he open his lips again until the ride was at an end.

Hope did not carry out her threat of retiring to bed as soon as she reached home. She reflected that, even if she did so, she would have to get up again some time or other and face whatever trials might be in store for her: so she came down to dinner as usual, and was agreeably surprised to find that her mishap (of which Dick had given his own account) was considered a subject rather for condolence than for sneers.

It is needless to say that Captain Cunningham and Miss Herbert had enjoyed the very best run on record, and equally needless to add that they did not spare their hearers a single incident of it. There are circumstances under which even the most forbearing of mortals cannot help triumphing a little over their less fortunate friends, and, whatever may have been the good points that Dick had discovered in his sister’s character, he would hardly have ventured to name forbearance as one of them. From making disagreeable speeches to Hope she did, however, forbear (for she was in an excellent humor); and the latter, not being called upon to undertake her own defence, was able to watch Bertie Cunningham, in whose proceedings the few words that had fallen from Dick caused her to take a new and lively interest.

Certain it was that the young man was very attentive to the heiress that evening; and if some degree of reluctance was visible in his attentions, that only made them and him the more contemptible. Hope’s opinion of Captain Cunningham, which, after so many fluctuations, had lately been rising rapidly, began once more to sink to a low ebb. Also she felt very angry with him, and did not stop to ask herself why she should be angry with a man who was only behaving like

the majority of his neighbors, and whose conduct, after all, was no particular concern of hers.

A woman is never wise to be angry with a man for paying attention to another member of her sex ; but she is still less wise if she lets him see that she is angry. It was this error in judgment which Hope now thought fit to commit. Captain Cunningham remained day after day at Farndon, giving no hint of intended departure ; day after day his hostess treated him with marked coolness, keeping out of his way as much as might be ; and, although—or perhaps because—he guessed what had brought about this change in her demeanor, he felt it quite essential to his comfort that he should ask her the reason of it. So, one afternoon when Carry had driven over to Windsor to do shopping, Hope encountered him in the park, looking grave and cast down, and was obliged to accede to his request that he might be permitted to walk home with her.

"It is very kind of you to put up with this infliction, Mrs. Herbert," he said, humbly ; "for I know you would rather have my room than my company."

"Not at all, I assure you," answered Hope, with perfunctory politeness.

"One understands what that means. I wish you would tell me how I have offended you."

"Really, Captain Cunningham, you have not offended me in any way. How could you, when we have hardly exchanged a dozen words since you came?"

"That is what I can't make out ; but I am certain of the fact. If I haven't said anything wrong, I must have done something."

"Your conscience seems to be uneasy."

"So my friend Mrs. Pierpoint is always telling me. You are something like her."

"I suppose that is a great compliment to me, is it not?"

"You don't know her, or you wouldn't speak in that sarcastic tone," the young man answered, warmly. "I am not sure that she is quite in your style ; perhaps she isn't ; but there never breathed a kinder woman or a better friend. She has been a sort of mother to me, and I should think I was paying anybody a compliment by comparing her to Mrs. Pierpoint. However, I didn't mean to say that you resembled her particularly ; only that you reminded me of her for a moment. She has a way of looking displeased with me, and when I ask her what is the matter she says, as you did just now, that I have a bad conscience."

"I dare say she is quite right," remarked Hope, her countenance
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relaxing into a smile; for, after the unkind things that had been said about Mrs. Pierpoint in her hearing, it was satisfactory to find that that lady had been "a sort of mother" to Captain Cunningham. "And what are the offences of which your conscience ought to accuse you, according to her?"

"Oh, it's always the same thing. She has made up her mind that I am to marry somebody with money. There is no doubt at all about my being driven to that sooner or later; only she wants it to be soon, whereas I should like it to be as late as possible. And so we differ."

"Mrs. Pierpoint cannot be a real friend of yours if she urges you to marry for money," said Hope, severely. But the look of mingled astonishment and amusement which her companion turned upon her caused her to color and descend with some abruptness from that high critical level. "Of course," she added, "many people do marry for money; but it is hardly friendly to advise them to do so."

"Well, I don't know," said Bertie, slowly: "one either marries for love or in order to gain something. Does it matter so much whether that something is money, or a home, or a protector, or position?"

Hope did not enjoy being arraigned by implication in this way; but she had her defence ready. "In cases of that kind it is quite impossible to judge for another person," she answered; "but I think there are distinctions. One may marry without love and yet have a very sincere liking and respect and admiration for one's husband—or wife."

"Quite so. And why shouldn't I have all three for the lady whom Mrs. Pierpoint wishes me to lead to the altar?"

"How can I tell, when I do not know who she is?"

"Oh, if you don't know who it is! However, I will confess that I have no special respect or admiration for her: I like her well enough when she doesn't bully me. The fact is, Mrs. Herbert, that a man in my position can't pick and choose. He may, perhaps, have seen just one woman in his life whom he would have married, if she would have had him, and if he had been an elder instead of a younger son, and if etc., etc. But, things being as they are with him, he must put up with what he can get."

"That sounds as if 'what he can get' had a pleasant prospect before her. At any rate, she ought not to be deceived; that much is certain, whatever else may be doubtful. You have no right to try and persuade a woman that you care for her, when it is only her money that you want."

"Now, Mrs. Herbert, you know very well that no woman is ever really deceived in that way, unless she chooses to deceive herself. I am

not more fond of humbug than other people; but it does seem to me that just a little bit of humbug is inevitable. You wouldn't wish me to go to Miss—shall we call her Miss Jones?—and say, 'Upon the whole, you are rather abhorrent to me; but I have an idea that you are willing to become my wife; and, as you are rich enough to keep us both in comfort, I shall be prepared to make you Mrs. Cunningham as soon as you like.'"

"Yes, I should," Hope declared. "If those are your real feelings, I think you ought to express them,—or else not propose at all."

"You make my blood run cold!" exclaimed Bertie. "All things considered, perhaps I won't propose at all. I wonder whether you would expect the same dreadful candor from a woman as you do from a man."

The worst of this style of discussion by innuendo is that it is sure eventually to reach a point at which the *argumentum ad hominem* will be employed in such a manner as to be no longer capable of being ignored. Hope felt that this moment was fast approaching, and was therefore very glad when a sudden turn in the path along which she and her companion were walking brought them face to face with Jacob Stiles, who had come out for a stroll in the gloaming, as his owl-like habit was. Jacob started, bowed, and made as though he would have passed on; but Hope intercepted him.

"Good-evening, Mr. Stiles," she said: "I have been wondering when I was to see you again. You have been very busy, I suppose."

"Yes," answered Jacob, in his slow, hesitating way. "At least, not very; but I have always work to do." He added, timidly, "I was sorry to hear that you lost your run the other day. Perhaps Mr. Herbert would allow me to break in a mare for you that he has in the stable. She is hardly up to his weight; but she is very well bred, and would carry a lady beautifully."

"You are very kind," said Hope; "but, after my exhibition the other day, I had made up my mind to forswear hunting. What do you think, Captain Cunningham? Might I give myself one more chance? I don't know whether you have been introduced to Mr. Stiles."

Captain Cunningham had not had that pleasure; but he had been told about Jacob by Miss Herbert, and was so good as to say that if anybody knew how to school a hunter he believed that Mr. Stiles did. He was very polite to the artist during the few minutes of conversation that followed,—too polite, as that over-sensitive young man felt. Hope had treated him as an equal, thereby earning his adoration; Captain Cunningham, with the best intentions, let him see that they did not

belong to the same class. Jacob was forever tormenting himself in this way and detecting slights which nobody meant to inflict upon him. From living so much alone, and so seldom speaking or being spoken to, he had learned to take men's measures by other methods than those which are in common use, and, as he had a natural aptitude for the study of humanity, it often happened to him to ground accurate conclusions upon some trifle which would have escaped the notice of nine people out of ten.

He jumped to a conclusion, and a somewhat startling one, now ; for when Hope and her companion proceeded on their way towards the house, leaving him in the falling darkness, he muttered, "That is the man, then ! I thought there must be somebody ; and her eyes brightened every time that she spoke to him. It is a pity ; although he would not have been good enough for her. But, then, who is good enough for her ? Certainly not her husband, who will never trouble himself to discover whether she is happy or not. That man takes everything as a right. The world has always gone well with him, and he can't understand what other folks find to grumble at in it, or why anybody should ever be tempted to stray off the straight course. I suppose it never occurred to him that Jacob Stiles in his shoes would have been quite as respectable a member of society as he is."

W. E. Norris.

(To be continued.)

TO HIS BOOK.

(Imitated from the *Epistles of Horace*, I. 20, expressly for "*Ballads of Books*," to be edited by *Brander Matthews*.)

FOR mart and street you seem to pine
 With restless glances, book of mine !
 Still craving on some stall to stand,
 Fresh pumiced from the binder's hand.
 You chafe at locks, and burn to quit
 Your modest haunt and audience fit,
 For hearers less discriminate.
 I reared you up for no such fate.

Still, if you *must* be published, go ;
But, mind, you can't come back, you know !
"What have I done?" I hear you cry,
And writhe beneath some critic's eye ;
"What did I want?"—when, scarce polite,
They do but yawn, and roll you tight.
And yet methinks, if I may guess
(Putting aside your heartlessness
In leaving me and this your home),
You should find favor, too, at Rome.
That is, they'll like you while you're young.
When you are old, you'll pass among
The Great Unwashed, then, thumb'd and sped,
Be fretted of slow moths unread,
Or to Herda you'll be sent,
Or Utica, for banishment !
And I, whose counsel you disdain,
At that your lot shall laugh amain,
Wryly, as he who, like a fool,
Pushed o'er the cliff his restive mule.
Stay! there is worse behind. In age
They e'en may take your babbling page
In some remotest "slum" to teach
Mere boys the rudiments of speech !
But go. When on warm days you see
A chance of listeners, speak of me.
Tell them I soared from low estate,
A freedman's son, to higher fate
(That is, make up to me in worth
What you must take in point of birth) ;
Then tell them that I won renown
In peace and war, and pleased the town ;
Paint me as early gray, and one
Little of stature, fond of sun,
Quick-tempered, too,—but nothing more.
Add (if they ask) I'm forty-four,
Or was, the year that over us
Both Lollius ruled and Lepidus.

Austin Dobson.

OUR EXPERIENCE MEETINGS.

II.

MY EXPERIENCES AS AN AMATEUR ELOCUTIONIST.

THE editor of *Lippincott's Magazine* has asked me for my experience as an amateur elocutionist, and it is with much diffidence that I undertake the task of attempting to describe the impressions of that hybrid creature *an amateur player who appears in public*. We are all reciters to a greater or less degree in our youth, but it is seldom that an innate attraction for dramatic effects, or a sentimental nature, or whatever else we choose to call it, carries us beyond our crude childish recitations when the stern maternal impulse is removed. Even when such is the case, however, our experience is gained so gradually, and the artistic effort is so associated and intertwined with social questions, that in point of fact an amateur scarcely knows when he did begin or where he stands. An amateur never addresses an ordinary theatre or concert-hall audience, gathered of its own will, presumably at a performance congenial to its tastes; and it is therefore hard to establish that sympathy which must mutually exist between the performer and the listeners before the former can display his best forces. Our audiences are usually extremes, all women, all men, all young, all old, all poor, all rich,—all something,—generally with their minds made up for or against the entertainment, or, at any rate, for or against the player.

It is said that Mr. Labouchere desires never to know an artist personally until he has passed judgment on his work,—recognizing how much merely personal likes or dislikes may warp the justice of his criticism. In an amateur audience there are but few not predisposed one way or another. They have heard of you through a friend or detractor, who has painted you black or white, as the case may be. The word amateur in itself is killing, and to the public means work half done, with some charitable purpose as its excuse. One is always more or less compelled into a charitable act: it is rarely a free gift, and amateur tickets are crammed down the public throat. Is it to be wondered at that they do not digest well, and that our audiences are of a dyspeptic turn by the time we face them?

But my personal experience has been asked for. I scarcely remember the day when I did not recite: as a child I was made to learn a verse of poetry daily, and such is the force of habit that a day never

passes that I do not memorize a few lines. All children are fond of the heroic style; but as we lived during the war in the lonely mountains of North Carolina, and went through many stirring and exciting experiences, our thoughts took a particularly martial turn. The lays of Aytoun and Macaulay were gospel to us, and I think my *début* was as "Horatius who kept the bridge."

One day I was reciting this poem out of doors, near a little stream, and when I came to that verse in which Horatius, after addressing a prayer to the Tiber, "with his harness on his back plunged headlong in the tide," I became so zealous that I jumped into this home-made Tiber, whose name was "*Mud Creek*," dragging with me my two-year-old sister and brother, and made for the opposite bank. We were seen, and pulled out like three little drowned rats, and I was soundly smacked and sent to bed: shoes and clothes were not to be trifled with in war days.

My *début* was not a success. Still, at all the little family gatherings I was called on to contribute to the general entertainment, and finally began appearing in public. But my first efforts could only have been borne with by reason of their earnestness, as I knew nothing of artistic effects and methods. I usually find my first recitation ineffective, as my audience seems taken up with my personality: this leads me to believe I must have distracting mannerism.

Every audience has to be won over, and an amateur does not always have the time or chance. I find my own frame of mind more or less reflected by the audience, in the shape of coldness, if I am tired or nervous. Constant habit and practice and knowledge of stage-methods doubtless enable a professional to play a part evenly and well, however little he may fancy it; but I find I must feel the beauty of the lines or the lesson they teach to do good work, and, at any rate, after reciting or acting I feel discouraged and disappointed. The theatrical managers and professionals have always treated me with unvarying courtesy and kindness, and even encouragement. To Mr. David Belasco especially I am indebted for much valuable advice and friendly counsel. The success of a recitation naturally depends much on the choice of the piece, and I rarely decide upon my selection until the last moment, when I am on the spot and have made my estimate of the general character of the audience. Our judgment on a question of this sort is anything but infallible, and at times, when trusting to my own instincts, I have arrived at very unfortunate results. But if a piece touches me and I feel its pathos, it is very natural to suppose it will affect others in the same way if properly interpreted. I am only a beginner, however, and my experiences are almost all experiments.

I find it far easier to interest an audience by a story with a moral than by something abstract, however superior the versification of the latter may be, and I have generally found country audiences more appreciative of serious pieces than those in the city. City people want something gayer and more amusing, that will not make them think. Nor am I ashamed to confess that my most enthusiastic and generous critics have been workingmen and shop-girls and newsboys. For, if they have had fewer advantages in education and refining associations than those in a more fortunate position, their wits have been sharpened by practical trials and adversity, and the absence of affectation in themselves makes them quick to see through false sentiment and appreciate what is true.

An increasing fondness for the art, and the pleasure of contributing through it to some very worthy objects, have stimulated me to continue performing, notwithstanding much misconception and much that is annoying: more than once my inclination has been strong to give it all up; for after a failure or an unsatisfactory performance you have no chance to retrieve yourself for perhaps six months or a year. But in these things our natures are perhaps a little stronger than we are.

However hard and intelligently an amateur may study, it is impossible for him to acquire the stage-ease that the habit of appearing in front of the footlights gives a professional, making him appear to better advantage than an amateur who has possibly better natural gifts. If, along with the emotions we are attempting to describe, we convey to the audience half of the nervous and rickety feeling we really have, then we must make our audiences indeed uncomfortable. But I am speaking for myself only, as there are other amateurs with far more experience, and, I am sure, much greater ability to express it, than I.

Cora Urquhart Potter.

LITERARY CONFESSIONS OF A WESTERN POETESS.

I MUST have been nearly nine years old when I saw for the first time an editor. Wholly unconscious of the important part editors were to play in the drama of my life, I was yet deeply impressed by this first experience with the profession.

As I walked up the dusty road from school one hot afternoon, I saw a "covered carriage" standing at our gate, and a gentleman leaning over the fence in earnest conversation with my father. My pulses quickened with a pleasurable excitement, for "covered carriages" betokened in those days visitors from "town;" and, although I was rural born and bred, I was always lonely in the country,—always longing

for the stimulant of association with my kind, which to-day I find necessary to my work and my happiness.

On entering our humble but always cosy sitting-room, I saw a gentleman sitting in the cool shade of a vine-covered window, listening to the bright flow of conversation with which my mother was ever prepared. She was a woman whose beauty, brilliancy, and originality fitted her to adorn the most courtly circles: had fortune so placed her, she would have been an ornament to the *salons* of Madame de Staël; but instead she was doomed to the most humdrum existence possible to woman.

As I entered the room, my mother presented me to the gentleman, informing me that he was editor of the daily paper published at Madison, Wisconsin. He had driven into the country as far as my home—a distance of ten miles—with his companion, who was, I learned afterwards, endeavoring to persuade my father to invest in some railroad venture, which proved to be an inglorious failure. (This is equally applicable to the attempt and to the venture.)

The editor took me on his knee, and said, "You do not look like a country-girl: you more resemble our little city-girls, you seem so delicate. I fear you study too hard."

What an indescribable thrill of happiness his words gave me! To be told that I resembled a city-girl,—and told so by an editor! What more could life hold for me? In memory of the pleasure I derived from those words, I can afford to forgive a good many uncomplimentary things which have been said of me since then by other members of his profession.

I had already composed one or two high-wrought romances. I have one of them now. It is written on odd slips of waste paper, and carefully sewed between covers of blue wall-paper. It deals with cruel step-mothers, brave lovers, daring maidens, and lost children. Three marriages take place in the last chapter. A little girl is lost while hunting for the cows, and found years afterwards precisely the same age as when she disappeared. Its title and preface read as follows:

"Minnie Tighthand and Mrs. Dunley. An eloquent novel written by Miss Ella Wheeler.

"PREFACE.

"The following novel is a true story. I suppose the reader will doubt it, but it is true. It is a scene that I witnessed while living in England, and after I came to America I published it. The reader may believe it now."

Several of the chapters are prefaced with original verses, of which I give a sample:

Head covered with pretty curls,
Face white as snow,
Her teeth look like handsome pearls,
She's tall and merry too.

I believe this to have been my earliest attempt at rhyme.

After having seen a live editor, I felt stimulated to new efforts, and so much of my time was given to literary labors that I soon won from my teasing brother the sarcastic appellation of "Little Authoress." As it was intended for a term of reproach, and was used only on occasions when I displeased him, it caused me the most bitter chagrin. Many a time I have run wailing into the house from play, and when the origin of my misery was inquired into I could only reply, "*Eddie has called me an authoress.*" To my (and no doubt his) distinct recollection, my brother received several chastisements for calling his sister an authoress. Later on, he was inclined to chastise any one who intimated that she was not. But to this day the word "authoress" has an intensely disagreeable sound to me, owing to its early associations.

At fourteen I began to print crude sketches and essays and stories in the New York *Mercury*. One day my older brother was reading aloud a beautiful poem by Ethel Lynn, and I said, "When I hear a poem like that it makes me suffer so, I feel I shall faint or die."

He looked at me very earnestly, and answered, "If you feel like that, you can *write* poetry."

I had already written a good many verses, but had never submitted them for publication. Encouraged by his words, I composed a poem—it was a very desperate love-song, too, I remember—and sent it to the New York *Mercury*. It was published, ridiculed, and burlesqued through half a column, but, fortunately, my name was withheld. The editor closed by saying that if his cruelty had hindered this new aspirant for fame from ever attempting another line of poetry, he had done her a kindness and the world a favor. I was overwhelmed with confusion and shame; yet I continued to write verses, and in less than two years from that time was basking in the sunlight of local fame and appreciation.

About that period I wrote a great deal of extreme and violent verse on the subject of total abstinence, which attracted considerable attention. These verses were soon afterwards published in a small volume entitled "Drops of Water." I sold the copyright to The National Temperance Publishing House, in New York, for fifty dollars,

and felt myself rich in money and fame. I was the author of a book and the possessor of fifty dollars. The little volume was republished in London, England, and this foreign edition brought me thirty pounds, besides several appreciative letters from clergymen and reformers in England.

At the country school my teachers were inclined to overlook my deficiency in simple fractions because of my faculty for composition. When I went to boarding-school, whither my parents made great sacrifices to send me for a short time, I hailed the advent of "composition-day" with delight. We had recently been examined in mathematics, and in a scale of one hundred my room-mate stood ninety-five, I *twenty*. I hoped to retrieve my reputation by a brilliant success in composition.

We were all requested to write a narrative. I was at that time contributing to the columns of the *Waverley Magazine*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and various other periodicals, and a "narrative" seemed to be exactly in my line. I prepared a tale of love, adventure, jealousy, and woe, which ended happily with the peal of wedding-bells. I believed my literary reputation would be undisputed in the school thereafter. But our trim and austere preceptress handed it back to me, saying, coldly, "You have evidently been reading the *New York Ledger*. It is pernicious literature for young girls. You will do better in the future, no doubt."

I was again humiliated; but in less than a year's time after that I received my first *cheque*, and felt fully launched on the great sea of literature. Poems and stories flowed from my pen like water running down-hill; and when I was barely eighteen years old I was clothing myself with the proceeds of my pen and helping to furnish and brighten up the humble little home. The prices I received were small, but I wrote so voluminously that I managed to earn quite a little income.

When I was about nineteen I wrote eight poems in a single day! and I considered two in a day only a small achievement. Of course I sent out into the world an immense amount of trash, which I would gladly recall now. All my friends told me I was shaming the Muses by my reckless use of their gifts. I was urged to devote more time to study and to the perfecting of my work. But, look you! I was earning money to relieve the absolute necessities of life, and I was lifting many a burden from my mother's shoulders. With the wisdom of the world, our neighbors called me a lazy dreamer, who sat scribbling all day while her "folks" hired help to do the work I ought to do. The truth was, my pen paid a servant to lighten my mother's dreary labors, besides supporting myself.

Those were memorable days to me. I was intoxicated with my success; I radiated with love for all the world; my faith in humanity had received no shocks; I believed in everybody, and was conscious of no dislikes; I idealized men and women, and overestimated my own possibilities of achievement. I remember myself, as I then was, with mingled pity and envy. Letters came to me from many distinguished people, and the editors of Boston, New York, and other periodicals to which I contributed stimulated me with words of praise and encouragement. I lived in a world of dreams. I planned for myself a wonderful future of fame and wealth. Existence was an ecstasy.

I knew nothing of the world as yet, nothing of human nature, nothing of myself even. Yet, with the assurance of youth and the boldness of ignorance, and from the depths of a boundless imagination, I wrote of sorrows, joys, passions, and emotions which I have since experienced. With all the crudity and lack of art by which those poems are marred, they surprise me to-day by their truthfulness to human emotions. Afterwards, in a time of great trouble and suffering, I came upon some of those early verses, and it seemed to me they voiced perfectly the travail through which my soul was passing.

But they gave me a feeling of awe,—not of egotism. It was not I, the crude child-girl, immersed in a solitary farm-house, ignorant of the world as a babe, who wrote those songs: it was a power greater than I, an inspiration from realms beyond me.

People of intellect and wealth and social position began to seek me out. Invitations began to flow in upon me to visit in city homes. These visits increased my ambitions, and my necessities. I saw how other people lived and dressed, and my desire for *money* exceeded my love for art. I was passionately fond of social pleasures, and the desire to appear in a becoming toilet at a party overcame my resolve to write only two poems in a week. I wrote ten instead, and sacrificed art to fashion. And the next day, when I discovered that I had danced through my slippers, I wrote four more extremely faulty poems. But they purchased a new pair of slippers and a new pair of gloves.

These are shocking confessions. But they are absolutely true. And I hope my "brethren and sistren" who listen to these experiences of one who is *partially* reformed will offer up prayers in my behalf. I am afraid you will say I had no high ideals in art,—that I placed a purely commercial value on my gifts: I am afraid it would be almost the truth if you should say it. Yet I loved and gloried in my work. It was an ecstasy to me. And many and many a time I have knelt in

my little room under the sloping eaves and fervently thanked God for the gift that enabled me to be such a help to my parents and that gave me such broadening pleasures and advantages in life.

It seemed to me so grand and wonderful a thing to be able to carpet my mother's room, pay a doctor's bill, and clothe my own person with the proceeds of my pen, that I forgot the duty I owed to art.

I had innumerable discouragements and trials. Sometimes everything I sent out during a whole season would be rejected. Sickness and trouble came into the little home, and the demands upon my purse increased. I was obliged to decline an invitation to the most brilliant reception to which I had ever been invited, because I could not buy a suitable toilet for the occasion. I cried the entire night away, thinking of the music, the lights, the perfumes, the dancing. But the next day I wrote a poem and a story describing it all: so I realized some pecuniary benefit from the invitation at least.

Everything was "material" to me. The singing of a bird outside my window, the compliments paid me by my escort at the play, the sound of the reapers in the harvest-fields, the conversation of callers, my own restless heart, all gave me food for verses and romances.

I used to go to the book-stores and write down a list of addresses of various periodicals in different parts of the country. To these I would send out my manuscripts, often ten or twelve by one mail. At that time Frank Leslie's *Chimney Corner* and *Ladies' Journal* and *Harper's Bazar* and *Weekly* followed the very unjust rule of publishing poems and stories without giving the author's name. Frequently three or four poems of mine appeared in one issue of these periodicals. I considered it a great misfortune that I was denied credit for my work; I think now it was a blessing that so many of these waifs went nameless into the world. It never once occurred to me to seek the assistance of older writers in marketing my brain-wares, and I was too independent and too impatient to ask or allow any one to criticise my work before I sent it out. I was imbued with the foolish idea that it would be no longer my own original composition if I allowed any one to make suggestions. So off went my half-fledged birdlings almost as soon as they were through the shell.

It all seems a great pity to me now. But I enjoyed life, and caused others to enjoy it. After all, what is better than that?

As I gained in friends, they overwhelmed me and confused me with advice. I was urged to study the older poets as models and try to "form my style." I did not know what they meant, and did not try to learn. I was urged to devote my talents to reform; I was urged not to use them *for reform*, but to write on historical themes; and I

was told to give up writing sentimental trash and learn to be Nature's poet. But I could not interpret the voice of Nature; my ear was not attuned to understand her language, and it could understand and interpret the throbbing of a human heart. And, oddly enough, nothing sold so readily as this same "sentimental trash." There was always a ready market for my *heart-wails*, while my more ambitious efforts went begging. And it was as natural for me to sing of sentiment as for the phoebe-bird to make her own peculiar cry. So I listened to the advice of all my good friends, and followed my own fancies.

My mother wept and worried because I could not use all my income upon myself in travel and means of culture. But I discovered that whenever I allowed a selfish impulse to dominate, all my manuscripts would be rejected. When I planned for the happiness and comfort of others, good luck and unexpected success followed my efforts. Therefore I could not *afford* to be selfish. This has been my unvarying experience throughout my career.

I had barely passed into my twenties when I published a miscellaneous collection of poems called "Shells." The book is now out of print: it brought me no remuneration and much disappointment. I began to understand the world, to study human nature, and to marvel at my own chaotic emotions. Friends and strangers made a confidante of me. I became a sort of human cabinet, wherein were locked the secret sorrows and sins of humanity. The strange drama of life grew upon me. I felt myself capable of great things, and I wrote and published "Maurine," a novel in verse. I believed it would rank with "Lucille," and make my fortune. It has brought me but little over five hundred dollars, and very few people have heard of it. Yet I think it contains some of the best work of my life.

My income steadily increased, and with it my advantages for travel and society. I was at the high tide of life, with a superb vitality, perfect health, a riotous imagination, and an ardent temperament.

I had ceased to expect any sudden success in literature when I published "Poems of Passion." The intense excitement the book caused, the hue and cry raised against its alleged immorality, and the consequently remarkable sales, were all a stunning surprise to me. I had written of human nature as I had found it; I had no idea even that I was saying anything unusual. I meant to describe strong emotions strongly and with truth. Born into this world absolutely without caution, and with a blind faith in the good sense of people, I supposed the critics would say that I had written with force and fire and increased vigor, and with more finish than heretofore.

Instead, I was accused of outraging decency and violating the laws

against immorality. I was an unmarried and still young woman. The abuse my book received was very bitter for me to bear, because I felt it to be unjust. One critic in a small Western paper (not far from my old home) declared that the book would damn me socially and intellectually. I am still a welcome guest in circles where he could not even obtain a position as valet unless I gave him a recommendation, and my book has brought me warm words of praise from the most celebrated people in the land. And the proceeds from its first sales enabled me to build over and enlarge the old home, rendering my aging parents comfortable for life.

The letters I received after the appearance of the book were very amusing. One man wrote me, "I have just seen some namby-pamby verses of yours in the *Independent*. A woman who can write 'Poems of Passion' should not waste her talents on the goody-goody style of poetry, of which we have had too much already. The world wants fire, force, and originality: you can give it: for God's sake do not be cowed down by fools of critics." In the same mail came another letter, saying, "It is a great misfortune for a woman with your talents to use them in producing such immoral verses as I find in 'Poems of Passion.' They should be dedicated to religion, temperance, and reform." Both letters were from entire strangers. Two of my most valued and, as I had believed, most stanch friends cowered before the avalanche of abuse poured on the book, and swelled the chorus with their denunciations. After it had become a great financial success, and many of the leading citizens of Milwaukee had given me a benefit in its honor, these two "friends" wrote me letters of apology, and confessed that they had been too hasty in their condemnation. Truly, "nothing succeeds like success."

It is a curious fact that the loudest denunciations of the book came from people whose lives were the most immoral. They construed the poems from their own stand-point, I suppose.

Since the publication of "Poems of Passion," three years ago, I have had more demands for my work than I could supply. I no longer had to seek editors; they sought me. And for every cruel or severe word the book received it has received ten words of praise. When the newspapers announced that my recent (and only) novel, "Mal Moulée," was finished, six publishing houses wrote me for the first reading of the manuscript. All these things were pleasant offsets to the annoyances I had been subjected to.

As I look back over my life, I cannot remember the time when I did not write. My work has brought me happiness and success; every benefit or pleasure or joy that ever came to me I can trace directly to

my profession. It has been the key that has unlocked the doors to all good things in the world for me. And if it has, too, brought me many painful experiences, I must philosophically accept them as a part of the whole. No woman ever yet attained any degree of success through her own efforts in any public career without sometimes toiling through blinding tears and suffering from the innumerable hurts the rough world knows so well how to give.

That woman is endowed with a more delicate physical organization and more nervous sensibilities than man is an undisputed fact, and centuries of hot-house breeding have rendered her still more susceptible to the cold winds of publicity. In my early youth and ignorance of these things, I used to look upon a woman who had arrived at eminence, and say, "She has been blest by the gods and favored by mankind: how fortunate the star under which she was born!"

In the light of maturer years and experience I say now, "What courage, what patient endurance, what perseverance, what suffering, have been hers!"

One of the most important things for a woman to remember who sets forth upon a self-supporting career is the necessity of transacting all financial matters in a strictly business-like manner. If she borrows money, she must repay it with interest, as a man would do. If she contracts debts, she must pay them. And she must not expect especial consideration or favor in these things "because she is a woman." Not until women fully realize this can they expect to succeed.

We are dependent on the gallantries and affections of men in society and in the domestic relations; they are our courtiers or our kings, by nature and custom bound to give us the comfortable seat in the car or fetch our fan at the ball; but in business transactions we must forget all this and consider them simply our equals,—neither our masters nor our slaves; and if we would win their respect and encouragement, we must merit it by *well-balanced accounts*.

As I read over my own works, and painfully realize their great defects, I am moved to wonder why I have been accorded such unusual success, when many writers who far excel me as poets and artists have failed to win recognition or remuneration. I think it must be due to the fact that I threw into my work a great deal of the extreme vitality with which I was endowed. It touched the public like an electric wave and brought my verses into immediate notice.

Yet I shall be forgotten while more careful and conscientious artists live in the memory of the world. While I realize all my shortcomings, I do not see how I could have done differently in the past. I performed the duty nearest me as well as I knew how to do. Sweeter than fame,

which is, like St. John's little book, only sweet in the mouth, is to me the consciousness that I have been of practical assistance to those dear to me. I heard recently that Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman honored me by the remark that he wished he could have had the literary training of me from my twelfth year; he would have made a better poet of me. I believe this to be true. He would have taught me that the manner of expression is as worthy of consideration as the thought to be expressed,—a fact I was sadly tardy in discovering. He would have caused me to contribute more to art, but, I fear, less to duty, than I have done. I should have been a better poet, but a less useful financier and citizen. I should be remembered longer by critics, but less gratefully by those to whom I owe my existence.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

IN CASTLE DANGEROUS.

"WHAT we suffer from most," said the Spectre, when I had partly recovered from my fright, "is a kind of *aphasia*."

The Spectre was sitting on the arm-chair beside my bed in the haunted room of Castle Dangerous.

"I don't know," said I, as distinctly as the chattering of my teeth would permit, "that I quite follow you. Would you mind—excuse me—handing me that flask which lies on the table near you? . . . Thanks."

The Spectre, without stirring, so arranged the *a priori* sensuous schemata of time and space* that the silver flask, which had been well out of my reach, was in my hand. I poured half the contents into the cup and offered it to him.

"No spirits," he said, curtly.

I swallowed eagerly the heady liquor, and felt a little more like myself.

"You were complaining," I remarked, "of something like *aphasia*?"

"I was," he replied. "You know what *aphasia* is in the human subject? A paralysis of certain nervous centres, which prevents the patient, though perfectly sane, from getting at the words which he intends to use, and forces others upon him. He may wish to observe

* This article was originally written for *Mind*, but the author changed his. The reference is to Kant's Philosophy.

that it is a fine morning, and may discover that his idea has taken the form of an observation about the Roman Calendar under the Emperor Justinian. That is *aphasia*; and we suffer from what, I presume, is a spiritual modification of that disorder."

"Yet to-night," I responded, "you are speaking like a printed book."

"To-night," said the Spectre, acknowledging the compliment with a bow, "the conditions are peculiarly favorable."

"Not to *me*," I thought, with a sigh.

"And I am able to manifest myself with unusual clearness."

"Then you are not always in such form as I am privileged to find you in?" I inquired.

"By no means," replied the Spectre. "Sometimes I cannot appear worth a cent. Often I am invisible to the naked eye, and even quite indiscernible by any of the senses. Sometimes I can only rap on the table, or send a cold wind over a visitor's face, or at most pull off his bedclothes (like the spirit which appeared to Caligula and is mentioned by Suetonius) and utter hollow groans."

"That's exactly what you *did*," I said, "when you wakened me. I thought I should have died."

"I can't say how distressed I am," answered the Spectre. "It is just an instance of what I was trying to explain. We don't know how we are going to manifest ourselves."

"Don't apologize," I replied, "for a constitutional peculiarity. To what do you attribute your success to-night?"

"Partly to your extremely receptive condition, partly to the whiskey you took in the smoking-room, but chiefly to the magnetic environment."

"Then you do not suffer at all from *aphasia* just now?"

"Not a touch of it at this moment, thank you; but, as a rule, we all *do* suffer horribly. This accounts for everything that you embodied spirits find remarkable and enigmatic in our conduct. We *mean* something, straight enough; but our failure is in expression. Just think how often you go wrong yourselves, though *your* spirits have a brain to play on, like the musician with a piano. Now, *we* have to do as well as we can without any such mechanical advantage as a brain of cellular tissue"—here he suddenly took the form of a white lady with a black sack over her head, and disappeared in the wainscot.

"Excuse me," he said, a moment afterwards, quite in his ordinary voice: "I had a touch of it, I fancy. I lost the thread of my argument, and am dimly unconscious of having expressed myself in some unusual and more or less incoherent fashion. I hope it was nothing at all vulgar or distressing?"

"Nothing out of the way in haunted houses, I assure you," I replied,—“merely a white lady with a black sack over her head.”

“Oh! *that* was it,” he answered, with a sigh: “I often am afflicted in that way. Don’t mind me if I turn into a luminous boy, or a very old man in chains, or a lady in a green gown and high-heeled shoes, or a headless horseman, or a Mauth hound, or anything of that sort. They are all quite imperfect expressions of our nature,—symptoms, in short, of the malady I mentioned.”

“Then the appalling manifestations to which you allude are not the apparitions of the essential ghost? It is not in those forms that he appears among his friends?”

“Certainly not,” said the Spectre; “and it would be very promotive of good feeling between men and disembodied spirits if this were more generally known. I myself——”

Here he was interrupted by an attack of spirit-rappings. A brisk series of sharp faint taps, of a kind I never heard before, resounded from all the furniture of the room.* While the disturbance continued, the Spectre drummed nervously with his fingers on his knee. The sounds ended as suddenly as they had begun, and he expressed his regrets. “It is a thing I am subject to,” he remarked,—“nervous, I believe, but, to persons unaccustomed to it, alarming.”

“It is rather alarming,” I admitted.

“A mere stammer,” he went on; “but you are now able to judge, from the events of to-night, how extremely hard it is for us, with the best intentions, to communicate coherently with the embodied world. Why, there is the Puddifant ghost—in Lord Puddifant’s family, you know: *he* has been trying for generations to inform his descendants that the drainage of the castle is execrable. Yet he can never come nearer what he means than taking the form of a shadowy hearse-and-four and driving round and round Castle Puddifant at midnight. And old Lady Wadham’s ghost,—what a sufferer that woman is! She merely desires to remark that the family diamonds, lost many years ago, were never really taken abroad by the valet and sold: he only had time to conceal them in a secret drawer behind the dining-room chimney-piece. Now she can get no nearer expressing herself than producing a spirited imitation of the music of the bagpipes, which wails up and down the house and frightens the present Sir Robert Wadham and his people nearly out of such wits as a county family may possess. And that’s the way with almost all of us: there is literally no connection

* A similar phenomenon is mentioned in Mr. Howells’s learned treatise, “An Undiscovered Country.”

(as a rule) between our expressions and the things we intend to express. You know how the Psychical Society make quite a study of rappings, and try to interpret them by the alphabet? Well, these, as I told you, are merely a nervous symptom, annoying, no doubt, but not dangerous. The only spectres, almost, that manage to hint what they really mean are Banshees."

"They intend to herald an approaching death?" I asked.

"They do, and abominably bad taste I call it, unless a man has neglected to insure his life, and *then* I doubt if a person of honor could make use of information from—from that quarter. Banshees are chiefly the spectres of attached and anxious old family nurses, women of the lower orders, and completely destitute of tact. I call a Banshee rather a curse than a boon and a blessing to men. Like most old family servants, they are apt to be presuming."

It occurred to me that the complacent Spectre himself was not an unmixed delight to the inhabitants of Castle Dangerous, or at least to their guests, for they never lay in the Green Chamber themselves.

"Can nothing be done," I asked, sympathetically, "to alleviate the disorders which you say are so common and distressing?"

"The old system of spiritual physic," replied the Spectre, "is obsolete, and the holy-water cure, in particular, has almost ceased to number any advocates, except the Rev. Dr. F. G. Lee, whose books," said this candid apparition, "appear to me to indicate superstitious credulity. No, I don't know that any new discoveries have been made in this branch of therapeutics. In the last generation they tried to bolt me with a bishop: like putting a ferret into a rabbit-warren, you know. Nothing came of *that*; and lately the Psychical Society attempted to ascertain my weight by an ingenious mechanism. But they prescribed nothing, and made me feel so nervous that I was rapping at large, and knocking furniture about, for months. The fact is that nobody understands the complaint, nor can detect the cause that makes the ghost of a man who was perfectly rational in life behave like an uneducated buffoon afterwards. The real reason, as I have tried to explain to you, is a solution of continuity between subjective thought and will on the side of the spectre, and objective expression of them—confound it——"

Here the sound of heavy feet was heard promenading the room, and balls of incandescent light floated about irresolutely, accompanied by the appearance of a bearded man in armor. The door (which I had locked and bolted before going to bed) kept opening and shutting rapidly, so as to cause a draught, and my dog fled under the bed with a long low howl.

"I do hope," remarked the Spectre, presently, "that these interruptions (only fresh illustrations of our malady) have not frightened your dog into a fit. I have known very valuable and attached dogs expire of mere unreasoning terror on similar unfortunate occasions."

"I'm sure I don't wonder at it," I replied; "but I believe Bingo is still alive: in fact, I hear him scratching himself."

"Would you like to examine him?" asked the Spectre.

"Oh, thanks, I am sure he is all right," I answered (for nothing in the world would have induced me to get out of bed while he was in the room). "Do you object to a cigarette?"

"Not at all, not at all; but Lady Dangerous, I assure you, is a very old-fashioned châtelaine. However, if *you* choose to risk it——"

I found my cigarette-case in my hand, opened it, and selected one of its contents, which I placed between my lips. As I was looking round for a match-box, the Spectre courteously put his forefinger to the end of the cigarette, which lighted at once.

"Perhaps you wonder," he remarked, "why I remain at Castle Dangerous, the very one of all my places which I never could bear while I was alive—as you call it?"

"I had a delicacy about asking," I answered.

"Well," he continued, "I am the Family Genius."

"I might have guessed *that*," I said.

He bowed and went on: "It is hereditary in our house, and I hold the position of Genius till I am relieved. For example, when the family want to dig up the buried treasure under the old bridge, I thunder and lighten and cause such a storm that they desist."

"Why on earth do you do *that*?" I asked. "It seems hardly worth while to have a Genius at all."

"In the interests of the family morality. The money would soon go on the turf, and on dice, drink, etc., if they excavated it; and then I work the Curse, and bring off the Prophecies, and so forth."

"What prophecies?"

"Oh, the rigmarole the old family seer came out with before they burned him for an unpalatable prediction at the time of the '15. He was very much vexed about it, of course, and he just prophesied any nonsense of a disagreeable nature that came into his head. You know what these crofter fellows are,—ungrateful, vindictive rascals. He had been in receipt of out-door relief for years. Well, he prophesied stuff like this: 'When the owl and the eagle meet on the same blasted rowan-tree, then a lassie in a white hood from the east shall make the burn of Crosscleugh run full red,' and drivel of that insane kind. Well, you can't think what trouble that particular prophecy gave me. It had to

be fulfilled, of course, for the family credit, and I brought it off as near as, I flatter myself, it could be done."

"Lady Dangerous was telling me about it last night," I said, with a shudder. "It was a horrible affair."

"Yes, no doubt, no doubt; a cruel business! But how I am to manage some of them I'm sure *I* don't know. There's one of them in rhyme. Let me see,—how does it go?

When Mackenzie lies in the perilous ha',
The wild Red Cock on the roof shall crawl,
And the lady shall flee ere the day shall daw,
And the laird shall girth in the deed man's thrall.

"The 'crowing' of the wild Red Cock' means that the castle shall be burned down, of course (I'm beginning to know his style by this time), and the lady is to elope, and the laird—that's Lord Dangerous—is to expire in the 'deed man's thrall': that is the name the old people give the Secret Room. And all this is to happen when a Mackenzie, a member of a clan with which we are at feud, sleeps in the Haunted Chamber,—where we are just now. By the way, what is *your* name?"

I don't know what made me reply, "Allan Mackenzie." It was true, but it was not politic.

"By Jove!" said the Spectre, eagerly. "Here's a chance! I don't suppose a Mackenzie has slept here for those hundred years. And, now, how is it to be done? Setting fire to the castle is simple,"—and I remembered how he had lighted my cigarette,—“but who on earth is to elope with Lady Dangerous? She's fifty, if she's a day, and evangelical *à tout casser*! Oh, no; the thing is out of the question. It really must be put off to another generation or two. There is no hurry."

I felt a good deal relieved. He was clearly a being of extraordinary powers, and might, for anything I knew, have made *me* run away with Lady Dangerous. And then, when the pangs of remorse began to tell on her ladyship,—never a very lively woman at the best of times—However, the Spectre seemed to have thought better of it.

"Don't you think it is rather hard on a family," I asked, "to have a Family Genius, and Prophecies, and a Curse, and——"

"And everything handsome about them!" he interrupted me by exclaiming. "And you call yourself a Mackenzie of Megasky! What has become of family pride? Why, you yourselves have Gruagach of the Red Hand in the hall, and he, I can tell you, is a very different sort of spectre from *me*. Pre-Christian, you know,—one of the oldest ghosts in Ross-shire. But as to 'hard on a family,'—why, *noblesse oblige*."

"Considering that you are the Family Genius, you don't seem to have brought them much luck," I put in; for the house of Dangerous is neither rich in gold nor very well preserved in reputation.

"Yes, but just think what they would have been *without* a Family Genius, if they are *what* they are *with one*! Besides, the Prophecies are really responsible," he added, with the air of one who says, "I have a partner,—Mr. Jorkins."

"Do you mind telling me one thing?" I asked, eagerly. "What is the mystery of the Secret Chamber?—I mean the room whither the heir is taken when he comes of age, and he never smiles again, nor touches a card except at baccarat?"

"Never smiles *again*!" said the Spectre. "Doesn't he? Are you quite certain that he ever smiled *before*?"

This was a new way of looking at the question, and rather disconcerted me.

"I did not know the Master of Dangerous before he came of age," said I, "but I have been here for a week, and watched him and Lord Dangerous, and I never observed a smile wander over their lips. And yet little Tompkins" (he was the chief social buffoon of the hour) "has been in great force, and I may say that I myself have occasionally provoked a grin from the good-natured."

"That's just it," said the Spectre. "The Dangerouses have no sense of humor,—never had. I am entirely destitute of it myself. Even in Scotland, even *here*, this family failing has been remarked,—been the subject, I may say, of unfavorable comment. The Dangerous of the period lost his head because he did not see the point of a conundrum of Macbeth's. We felt, some time in the fifteenth century, that this peculiarity needed to be honorably accounted for, and the family developed that story of the Secret Chamber, and the Horror in the house. There is nothing in the chamber whatever,—neither a family idiot aged three hundred years, nor a skeleton, nor the devil, nor a wizard, nor missing title-deeds. The affair is a mere formality to account creditably for the fact that we never see anything to laugh at,—never see the joke. Some people can't see ghosts, you know" (lucky people! thought I), "and some can't see jokes."

"This is very disappointing," I said.

"I can't help it," replied the Spectre: "the truth often is. Did you ever hear the explanation of the haunted house in Berkeley Square?"

"Yes," said I. "The bell was heard to ring thrice with terrific vehemence, and on rushing to the fatal scene they found him beautiful in death."

"Fudge!" replied the Spectre. "The lease and furniture were left to an old lady, who was not to underlet the house nor sell the things. She had a house of her own in Albemarle Street which she preferred, and so the house in Berkeley Square was never let till the lease expired. That's the whole affair. The house was empty, and political economists could conceive no reason for the waste of rent except that it was haunted. The rest was all Jimmy——"

"Oh, Jimmy was in it, was he?" I interrupted.

"I mean, all Miss Broughton's imagination, in 'Tales for Christmas Eve.'"

He had evidently got on his hobby, and was beginning to be rather tedious. The contempt which a genuine old family ghost has for mere *parvenus* and impostors is not to be expressed in words, apparently, for Mauth hounds, of prodigious size and blackness, with white birds, and other disastrous omens, now began to display themselves profusely in the Haunted Chamber. Accustomed as I had become to regard all these appearances as mere automatic symptoms, I confess that I heard with pleasure the crow of a distant cock.

"You have enabled me to pass a most instructive evening,—most agreeable, too, I am sure," I remarked to the Spectre,—“but you will pardon me for observing that the First Cock has gone. Don't let me make you too late for any appointment you may have about this time—anywhere.”

"Oh, you still believe in that old superstition about cock-crow, do you?" he sneered: "I thought you had been too well educated. 'It faded on the crowing of the cock,' did it, indeed, and that in Denmark, too,—almost within the Arctic Circle! Why, in those high latitudes, and in summer, a ghost would not have an hour to himself, on these principles. Don't you remember the cock Lord Dufferin took north with him, which crowed at sunrise, and ended by crowing without intermission and going mad, when the sun did not set at all? You must observe that any rule of that sort about cock-crow would lead to shocking irregularities, and to an early-closing movement for spectres in summer, which would be ruinous to business,—simply ruinous,—and, in these days of competition, intolerable."

This was awful, for I could see no way of getting rid of him. He might stay to breakfast, or anything.

"By the way," he asked, "who does the Cock at the Lyceum just now? it is a small but very exacting part,—'Act I. scene 1. Cock crows.'"

"I believe Mr. Irving has engaged a real fowl, to crow at the right moment behind the scenes," I said. "He is always very particular

about these details. Quite right, too. 'The Cock, by kind permission of the Aylesbury Dairy Company,' is on the bills."

I knew nothing about it; but if this detestable Spectre was going to launch out about art and the drama there would be no sleep for me.

"Then the glow-worm," he said: "have they a real glow-worm for the Ghost's 'business' (Act I. scene 5), when he says,—

Fare thee well at once:
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his ineffectual fire.

Did it ever strike you how inconsistent that is? Clearly, the ghost appeared in winter: don't you remember how they keep complaining of the weather?

For this relief much thanks; 'tis bitter cold,

and

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold;

and then they go on about the glow-worms in the neighborhood! Most incongruous! How does Furnival take it? An interpolation by Middleton?"

I don't like to be rude, but I admit that I hate being bothered about Shakespeare, and I yawned.

"Good-night," he said, snappishly, and was gone.

Presently I heard him again, just as I was dropping into a doze.

"You won't think, in the morning, that this was all a dream, will you? Can I do anything to impress it on your memory? Suppose I shrivel your left wrist with a touch of my hand? Or shall I leave 'a sable score of fingers four' burned on the table? Something of that sort is usually done."

"Oh, *pray* don't take the trouble," I said. "I'm sure Lady Dangerous would not like to have the table injured, and she might not altogether believe my explanation. As for myself, I'll be content with your word for it that you were really here. Can I bury your bones for you, or anything? Very well: as you *must* be off, good-night!"

"No, thanks," he replied. "By the way, I've had an idea about my apparitions in disguise. Perhaps it is my 'Unconscious Self' that does them. You have read about the 'Unconscious Self' in the *Spectator*?"

Then he really went.

A nun, in gray, who moaned and wrung her hands, remained in the room for a short time, but was obviously quite automatic. I slept till the hot water was brought in the morning.

Andrew Lang.

OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.

To speak after the manner of Mr. Henry James's distressingly conscientious characters, I am not sure that it is quite *right* for anybody to read "The Bostonians" through, so long as anything useful or entertaining remains to be done on earth; nevertheless, I have hardened my heart and resolutely offended to that extent, or nearly. Tennyson must have had prevision of such a reader when he wrote of

one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling through immeasurable sand
And over a weary, sultry land.

Rather more than two hundred thousand words without one interesting incident, one picture that is worth remembering, or one member of the *dramatis personæ* who deserves or repays the attention of either author or reader! It is the very Sahara of novels.

Length alone is not a fair objection. "Lorna Doone" is doubtless longer still, but "Lorna Doone" is a story, and a marvellously picturesque and powerful one; whereas "The Bostonians" is not a story any more than it is a treatise, having just enough of the qualities of the one to spoil the other, and being hopelessly without topic.

An anomalous young Southerner gradually falls in love with a young girl of uncanny, sibylline eloquence and charlatanic parentage. He has for his chief rival an unwholesome Boston spinster of disordered nerves, who turns tragical over the fear that her friend of friends may make common cause with the tyrant man. A featureless collector of bric-à-brac would rather like to marry the heroine himself. The inevitable Europeanized young widow—that is, Europeanized in the James sense—makes rather more ardent love to the hero. He fails in a very uninteresting way as a lawyer, a magazinist, and a child's tutor. He prosés, she prosés, all prosé. At last there is an altogether superfluous elopement, with hints that the happy couple will probably starve before long, unless they can live on her inspiration and his political recalcitrancy. That is about all, except elaborate pictures of corner-groceries, cheap lodging-houses, and other things of like interest.

The hero, if we may call him so, is the character who most nearly approaches to a real living interest; but it is impossible to believe in him. We hear much of his gracious, rather old-fashioned breeding; yet it is announced that "most of the people he had hitherto known had no tastes. They had a few habits." Reversing the common pronunciation of his section, he "prolonged his consonants and swallowed his vowels;" and this last procedure was the less remarkable, since, though a "lean, pale, sallow, shabby, striking young man," he was "conscious at bottom of a bigger stomach than all the culture of Charles Street could fill." This last sentence is not clipped from "Leaves of Grass," unless Mr. James has done the clipping. Furthermore, he is represented as prefacing his remarks to the ladies with "Murder!" and rejoicing in a "discourse pervaded by something almost African."

There is one good thing, though, to be said of this alarming native of the wilds: he is not a Bostonian. On our author's showing, that is a very dreadful epithet. Even the heroine, whose good behavior is carefully warranted, descends from an ex-member of the "Cayuga fraternity" and an arrant humbug, who "looked like the priest of a religion that was passing through the stage of miracles;" she had been "nursed in darkened rooms and suckled in the midst of manifestations;" had "grown up among people who disapproved of the marriage tie;" and is made to announce, "Well, I must say I prefer free unions." Poor Mississippian!

Then we have the philanthropic old lady of the dissolved featureless face and idiotic ways, who "belonged to any and every league which had ever been founded," and put out a "delicate, *dirty*, democratic hand" in greeting to gentlemen visitors. "No one had an idea how she lived." And Mrs. Luna, the travelled Bostonian, who was "very fond of attentions from men, with whom indeed she was reputed bold," and, moreover, was very liberal in revealing "her spasmodic disposition to marry again." Even her sister, Miss Chancellor, "a typical Bostonian," behaved in a very rude, churlish, and hardly sane style to her invited guest, and had settled that "almost everything that was usual was iniquitous." She is very properly referred to as "morbid" and a "ticklish spinster," with little in her favor except wildly good intentions and a knowledge of "her place in the Boston hierarchy." It seems she was not "a representative of the aristocracy. The Chancellors belonged to the *bourgeoisie*, the oldest and best." Unhappily, if one may judge by her conduct, she was neither a well-bred lady nor capable of becoming one. Passing lightly by the heroine's mother, with her snobbish ways, "distended and demoralized conscience," and reminiscences of old legerdemain which passed as spiritual manifestations, the busy doctress, who "looked like a boy, and not even like a good boy," and the statuesque agitator with "something public in her eye," all the rest of the feminine Bostonians of the story are very properly lumped together as "vicious old maids and fanatics and frumps, . . . common people and red-haired hoydens." The men fare no better; but, as they are made to take subordinate places, we need not linger over them here. It is rather hard to pick out one of either sex from the whole batch who would be considered respectable, or at least reliable in respectability, in any well-ordered community.

What does Mr. James mean by his title? Are these half-sane, half-decent, yet wholly prosaic and uninteresting creatures of his fancy "*the Bostonians*" of to-day? If so, assuredly there is much to be said in favor of his Mississippian's views. "He, too, had a private vision of reform, but the first principle of it was to reform the reformers." If they are not content to be judged elsewhere by such curiously-selected types, they should find some way to enlighten Mr. James as to the iniquity of his misrepresentations.

So far as the book is anything, it impresses one as a deteriorated cross or faint blended echo of "Esther Pennefeather" and "The Undiscovered Country," lacking the distorted vigor of the former and the airy and haunting charm of the latter. Olive's state of mind is not much nicer or pleasanter to contemplate than Esther's; and what a fall from the poetry of Egeria—so similarly situated—to the garish prose of Miss Tarrant! "An air of being on exhibition, of belonging to the troupe, of living in the gaslight."

The unwelcome reflection is forced on one that some men have a message which is easily exhausted, and lack willingness to put themselves in the way of

another. Mr. James has done good work in his day. It is a pity that he cannot or will not give us something more nearly approaching the merit of "Roderick Hudson," "The American," "The Europeans," or "A Passionate Pilgrim." Any one of the above I, for one, can read again and again with pleasure and profit; but I cannot imagine any one reading "The Bostonians" through even once, unless from a sense of duty or in the absolute dearth of anything better. Drayton's "Polyolbion" or "Byles on Bills" would have the preference every time.

W. H. Babcock.

MR. BABCOCK's article on "Song-Games and Myth-Dramas at Washington" (in the March number of this magazine) carries me back to the days and the plays of long ago. As a little child my playmates were few, being restricted to the little sisters and brothers of our populous nursery and the half-dozen children who shared with us the instructions of our home-school. The variety of our games was therefore not great, although the number was swelled almost indefinitely by our habit of dramatizing everything that came in our way,—stories from our reader, scraps of books that we heard our elders reading aloud (those were the days when Scott and Dickens were being read with the thrilling interest of novelty), our history-lessons,—even the multiplication-table. Both our plays and our playmates, however, being so closely restricted, the rare occasions when the number of either was augmented were red-letter days, and left a profound impression not easily to be effaced from our little minds.

Never shall I forget the thrill of weird and awful delight with which I once, and once only in my life, joined in playing the "Three Knights out of Spain." I was visiting somewhere with my mother, in a house where there were half-grown children several years older than myself. Who they were or where they lived I have forgotten, but often and often, by day or by night, the haunting memory of that play has arisen within me; I have felt again the thrill of heart at the approach of the three knights, the nameless horror of the assertion, "For her worth she must be sold," the awful mystery lurking behind the satirical "Fare thee well, my lady gay; I will return another day," the sudden throb and stillness of my heart at the entreaty, "Turn back, turn back, you Spanish knight." What if he should turn back! poor, hapless Lady Jane!

All this, and more, was often vaguely present with me, a dimly-receding memory, never to be clearly recalled until I came upon the version of the game in Mr. Newell's "Songs and Games of American Children." He has it "lords," not "knights;" but I am sure it was knights in my version, for I remember that the word at once recalled delicious stories told by Bride, our little Irish nurse-maid, over our dying nursery fire, and of these the heroes were very commonly knights on horseback, one, two, or three. And Mr. Newell has it,—

So fare you well, my lady gay;
We must turn another way.

But that is tame indeed to the vague awfulness of "I will return another day;" and I incline to think that ours was the true rendering.

Prominent in my nursery reminiscences is the figure of a dear little old great-aunt who brought us many a pleasant game out of the last century and the stately old Beacon-Street mansion where she was brought up. She was a great stickler for old-fashioned manners, and for conduct and language which were "genteel,"—a word which she held in great respect, though we children thought

it of somewhat dubious "gentility." It was she who taught us "Here comes the duke a-riding," given in several versions in Mr. Newell's book, and in still another form by Mr. Babcock. Our rendering was decidedly different from any of these, while combining elements of all; and, as these differences are always interesting, I give it here entire. I well remember the trim little figure, who always personated the duke, tripping back and forth in her pretty, old-fashioned dance-steps, holding out her skirts with her finger-tips as she sang,—

Here comes the duke a-riding,
With a ransom tansom tiddy-moselle;
Here comes the duke a-riding,
With a ransom tansom tee!

and how particular she was that we, too, should take nice steps, and by no means romp, as we danced up in a line to meet her, singing,—

What will you please to have, sir,
With a ransom tansom tiddy-moselle?
What will you please to have, sir,
With a ransom tansom tee?

And then the game went on,—

The fairest of your daughters, ma'am,
With a ransom tansom tiddy-moselle;
The fairest of your daughters, ma'am,
With a ransom tansom tee!

Take which you choose to have, sir,
With a ransom tansom tiddy-moselle;
Take which you choose to have, sir,
With a ransom tansom tee!

This is the fairest I can see;
So come, sweet maid, along with me.
This is the fairest I can see;
So come along with me!

And then the one chosen—usually the golden-haired "baby" of the time—became transformed into a second duke, and the game went on.

It was the same dear old nursery-guardian—we never were quite sure that she was not a fairy godmother, and not a simple great-aunt—who taught us the game given by Mr. Newell as "I come, I come," but which we always called, in more natural nursery-parlance, "Comety-come." I think that our form is the more authentic, being a very evident child-corruption of "Come as I come," to which the regulation response, "What do you come by?" is in perfect keeping.

To recur again to Mr. Newell's book, it seems to me obvious that in the game of "Pillows and Keys" the word was originally *kiss*. The whole game consists in kneeling upon a pillow or cushion and soliciting a kiss. Among the Dutch people of Rockland County, New York, a bunch of keys used to be held in the hand and shaken, as if to attract attention. The keys, however, are probably a late interpolation by some player of an inquiring turn of mind, who, like Mr. Newell, asked, "Why keys?"

The little myth-drama which has for its refrain the much-debated "Chicany,

chicany, crany crow" was especially dear to our hearts, and out of it and our personal experience grew another, highly amusing to us, but interesting now only as an illustration of how irresistibly the child-mind seizes upon everything as the *motif* of dramatic action.

In process of time, as the boys grew older and needed a little Latin, our home-school came to be presided over by a very irascible though kindly old gentleman, whose peculiarities and the mutual discomforts which we all unwittingly inflicted upon each other would fill a volume. It so happened that the scene of many of our plays was a delicious little boiling spring not far from the house, the source of infinite delights to us all from our very baby-days. To it we always rushed at the beginning of every recess, for a "drink," and it gradually grew to be a custom with us to fly thither as the bell began to ring, for a final draught before returning to our tasks. One day it happened that we all dawdled there, loath to leave the pleasant spot, and, as we entered the school-room long after time, each child was challenged by the peremptory forefinger of the master and made to give a reason for the displeasing tardiness. The excuse that we had gone to wash our hands being offered, the irate pedagogue sputtered out, "Well, when your hands get dirty, just run to the puddle *quick*, and wash, and don't let me catch you coming in again after the bell stops."

To every one of us there was something so irresistibly funny in the idea of calling our pellucid, babbling fountain of delights a "puddle" that we immediately seized upon it as the basis of a drama, and at the next recess began to play the following version of our old stock-piece:

Chicany, chicany, crany crow!
 I went to the puddle to wash my toe;
 When I came back the bell had rung.
 What did you ring it so quick for, old fox?
 To catch a scholar.
 What a-doing?
 Coming late to school.

Whereupon we would all scatter, screaming, "Catch me if you can! catch me if you can!" But, as the "old fox" in this case was purely imaginary, the game was always a short one.

L. S. H.

THE story of the "Old Man and his Pipe," in Mr. Babcock's very interesting article in the March number of this magazine, is remarkably suggestive to one who has puzzled over the group of similar stories to be met with in the legends of almost all primitive races. In essential elements it is identical with the German story of the "Seven Little Kids." Doubtless this is very familiar to my readers, but the substance may be briefly stated as follows. The mother goat goes away, leaving her seven little kids with the strict injunction not to open the door until her return. A wolf, in her absence, gets into the house by means of a trick and eats up six of the kids, the *youngest* only escaping by hiding in the *clock-case*. The mother comes home, finds out the mischief, and with the remaining kid goes in search of the wolf, whom she finds fast asleep. She rips open the wolf's stomach, and the little kids come frisking out, none the worse for their temporary imprisonment. So far the stories are almost exactly the same. The German story, however, adds an ethical motive, and closes with an exhibition of strict poetical justice. Instead of quietly opening a jugular while the wolf slept, they put paving-stones in the wolf's stomach and sewed it up again. The wolf

wakes, very thirsty after his somewhat heavy meal, and, going to the brook to drink, the weight of the stones topples him over into the water, and he perishes, as it were, by his own act.

Sir George W. Cox ("Aryan Mythology") explains the story as follows: "The wolf is here the night or the darkness, which tries to swallow up the seven days of the week, and actually swallows six. The seventh, the youngest, escapes by hiding herself in the clock-case. In other words, the week is not quite run out, and, before it comes to an end, the mother of the goats unrips the wolf's stomach, and places stones in it in place of the little goats, who come trooping out as the days of the week begin again to run their course."

I must not here enter upon any discussion. The explanation has seemed to me entirely inadequate, inasmuch as the *clock-case* is made to figure as an essential element, whereas the story existed for thousands of years before clocks came into existence. The story of Red Riding Hood, one cannot doubt, is simply another version of it. In this the number seven is wanting, and manifestly it cannot refer to the days of the week. M. Husson, indeed, whose general principle of interpretation is the same as that of Sir G. W. Cox, says that here the wolf is the *sun*. Even Mr. E. B. Tylor, who utterly repudiates the too easy analogical interpretation of myths, says of the story of the seven kids, "We can hardly doubt there is a quaint touch of sun-myth in a tale which took its present shape since the invention of clocks."

The story of the "Old Man and his Pipe" clearly enough refers to time and the arbitrary division of it into the days of the week. It may be taken as a sort of commentary or explanation of the tale. The kindred story of Cronos was by the Greeks considered as referring to time; and such we may believe to have been the significance *at some time* of the whole group of swallowing myths. But it does not follow, and it is not at all probable, that the originals of the stories had any such idea in them. As the various races reached a certain intellectual development they saw the appositeness of these stories, existing since the beginning of the race and growing out of the conditions of savage life and thoughts, as allegories of Time, the devourer of things. The story-teller of every age has used the old idea, but has adapted it to the conditions of the time and country in which he lived. It is the wolf, the bear, the lion, the jackal, the snake, the fish, that does the swallowing; and the range of things swallowed is equally wide. When civilization has advanced to such a point that men begin to inquire into the nature and origin of things, they have these stories, no longer believed in literally, to account for, and they begin to figure out various symbolical and more or less metaphysical meanings, which the primitive man who originated them was utterly incapable of understanding.

To Mr. Babcock's list of games let me add two which seem to me to have had an unmistakable mythological origin. The one is a common ring-play, or was common when I was a boy, called "Poison," or more often "*Pisen*." A handkerchief or other article is laid on the ground, and the children, joining hands, dance around it, singing and swaying their bodies, as savages still do in their sacred dances, the object being to make some one step on the harmless object, when he is "pisened," and can transfer the virus to his mates by a touch. Is this not a survival of the taboo?

The other is a boys' game, played at night. One boy, running through dark alleys and out-of-the-way places, from time to time calls, "Yaller horn!" Sometimes, if they are educated to the point, they say, "Yellow horn!" which I used

to suppose was correct. The other boys run after the first, and try to find him from the occasional blasts of his horn blown in the darkness. The play is sometimes called "Gray-Wolf." Now, let us remember that the Fenris wolf and the Midgard serpent were the great adversaries of Thor and Odin at Ragnarok, and it does not need much imagination to believe that the first boy is Heimdall blowing the Gjallar horn to assemble gods and men on the plain Vigvid for the last great conflict.

H. E. W.

THERE was a call lately for a new trade, adapted to the complexities of the modern city house,—that of the universal tinker. Now, with an extension of the same idea into the woman's kingdom, a correspondent sighs for a neighborhood darning. Most of us would agree as to the convenience; but the correspondent was not perhaps aware that the system recommended is in practical operation in Paris. In the family where our home was when there, punctually one day in the week came *la raccommodeuse*, and, having been established in a back room and given a cup of coffee, set to work on the ruin three children and an impatient man had wrought. She had for her pains her meals and twenty cents a day; and she had a *clientèle* of nearly a dozen families, from whom she drew occasionally something beyond the daily franc. To some she gave but half a day; but matters were so systematized that she was rarely without work. Very convenient the American boarder found her for the ripping and cleaning of old gowns and the darning of hose, which, in her devotion to the monuments of Paris, she had no time to touch. And, watching the cheery old woman over her task, she often thought what a relief a similar system would be to many an overtaxed American housekeeper. For that is the point: it is a system and a recognized trade. This one belonged to the lowest class; but others, handy at lace and finer work, with a patronage of wealth, often make much more. And even a franc a day, with a good living thrown in, was not to be despised.

Since the reign of bric-à-brac set in, we have professional dusters in the cities. It should be comparatively simple to introduce also professional menders. Perhaps a difficulty would arise as to amount of payment, since the women who mend for their families do not roll in wealth, and even fifty cents a day might seem to them an extravagance. And the sewing-woman who drags her life out on the same sum, boarding herself, would probably scorn less. But, once given her patrons, she might find her life both easier and more healthful; and the tired house-mothers, seeing the economy and the relief, would wonder why they did not do it before. Under the present system the thrifty women fret and tire themselves over the endless task; the sentimentally philanthropic and the unthrifty give away, to the increase of poverty often; and the old clo's men profit by the improvidence of the bachelors and husbands.

A little more co-operation everywhere would lighten women's work. Here, for instance, in a town of two thousand inhabitants, one woman for years made her pin-money by weekly brewing of yeast for her neighbors. She has gone out of the business now, her husband objecting; and the women are left lamenting the lost convenience. Yeast in plenty at the grocery,—patent yeast; but they all prefer the home-made, when they can get it. So, could they once get it, they would prefer the neighborhood mender.

E. F. W.